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Official Records

First Committee
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New York

Chairperson: Mrs. Juul ..... (Norway)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda items 82 to 97 (*continued*)

Thematic discussion on item subjects and introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chairperson: I would like to remind all delegations that the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions is 6 p.m. today. I would also like to stress again that delegations should ensure that the content of their submissions is accurate so that documents can be processed in a timely and efficient manner. In the event that delegations need to make minor changes or technical corrections to draft resolutions, I would kindly urge them to revise them orally, if possible, rather than requesting the Secretariat to issue a revised document. That would certainly help to maximize the efficiency of the Committee's work, while saving costs for the Organization.

Let us now begin our thematic discussion on the subjects of other weapons of mass destruction and the disarmament aspects of outer space.

Today, we have a guest speaker: the President-designate of the Sixth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention, Ambassador Masood Khan. I now invite Ambassador Khan to make a statement.

Mr. Khan (Biological Weapons Convention Review Conference): Thank you, Madam Chairperson, for giving me the opportunity to address the Committee and to hear its views on the pressing issue of biological weapons. I would also like to thank Mr. Nabuaki Tanaka, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for his support and comments. Last week, he said that, in confronting the dangers posed by weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), "practical, positive steps are within our reach". Let us take such steps with regard to biological weapons.

This thematic discussion in the First Committee is well timed. The Sixth Review Conference is around the corner, only a few short weeks away. Here in New York, we can take stock of the situation and consider the challenges and possibilities that lie before us. My remarks today will refer to the *PowerPoint* presentation that will be displayed in the conference room.

Let me start with two quotations. The first is from Secretary-General Kofi Annan who, on 5 December 2005, said that the Biological Weapons Convention was as relevant then as it was 30 years before, and that

> "Developments in the life sciences in the years ahead will no doubt bring remarkable benefits, but they may also carry with them, as an almost inevitable corollary, considerable dangers. There has never been more urgent need for international commitment to the universal application [of] and full compliance with the Convention".

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The second quotation is from Mr. Hans Blix, who stated in the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission Report of 1 June 2006 that

> "Nuclear, biological and chemical arms are the most inhumane of all weapons. Designed to terrify as well as destroy, they can, in the hands of either States or non-State actors, cause destruction on a vastly greater scale than any conventional weapons, and their impact is far more indiscriminate and long-lasting".

What is it that we can do at the Sixth Review Conference? It is an opportunity to reaffirm the ban on biological and toxin weapons. It is a chance to address the threat posed by the possible use of such weapons by terrorists. It is a matter of tremendous importance for global health and international peace and security. It also gives us an opportunity to explore cooperation and exchanges for responsible use of the biosciences for human development.

The Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) has had marked success in defining a clear and unambiguous global norm completely prohibiting the acquisition and use of biological and toxin weapons under any circumstances. The preamble to the Convention forcefully states that the use of disease as a weapon would be "repugnant to the conscience of mankind". The Convention captures the solemn undertaking of the States parties "never in any circumstance to develop, produce, stockpile or otherwise acquire or retain" such weapons. With 155 States parties, the treaty is not universal, but no country dares argue that biological weapons can ever have a legitimate role in national defence. Such is the force of the treaty.

The BWC is a landmark treaty. States parties have made dual commitments under the treaty, to destroy biological weapons and not to arm or re-arm. Successive Review Conferences have strengthened the Convention. We need to do more to make it more relevant and effective. The key lies in its faithful implementation.

The BWC is part of a network. It is a fundamental pillar, along with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) of the global regime against weapons of mass destruction. It is also part of a network of measures that deal directly and indirectly with the prevention of and response to biological weapons. Other parts of this network include the World Health Organization (WHO), the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), Interpol, UNESCO, Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), the international scientific organizations and the various United Nations agencies involved with emergency response.

Coordination is becoming ever more important. The Secretary-General in his recent report entitled "Uniting against terrorism: recommendations for a global terrorism strategy" (A/60/825), suggests the creation of a forum to coordinate these activities. The Review Conference will be, in effect, just such a forum, and we should use it as such.

We are all familiar with the history of the Convention, particularly that of the recent past. The Convention experienced disappointments, due largely to a difference of opinion on how to strengthen and improve its effectiveness. Changes in the international security environment since 2001, especially the focus on the threat of bioterrorism, have added urgency to our task. The Review Conference should build on the success of the Convention, find ways to overcome problems and convert divergences into convergences.

Our common objectives should be to strengthen the barriers against biological weapons, reduce the risk of bioterrorism and ensure that the vitally important peaceful applications of biological science and technology are safely and securely developed to their full potential for the benefit of people around the world.

We have already made a good start. We have a provisional agenda in our hands, thanks to the maturity and wisdom demonstrated by States parties. It is an agenda that is flexible enough to ensure a thorough review of all aspects of the Convention. At the Preparatory Committee in April, we met all the objectives we had set for ourselves and settled all the necessary procedural machinery. We are not sitting on our laurels. It is time to move to substance. Some States parties have already been working hard. A number of papers have been developed and circulated for discussion, and I understand that more are on their way.

I have had the opportunity to discuss ideas and proposals with individual delegations and with groups. It is too early to give a definitive account of what will

be on the table at the Review Conference. But let me give members a sense of what I have heard delegations express interest in so far. The field is still wide open.

Let me start this part of my presentation with an excerpt from the Hippocratic Oath:

> "I will apply dietetic measures for the benefit of the sick according to my ability and judgement; I will keep them from harm and injustice.
>
> "I will neither give a deadly drug to anybody if asked for it, nor will I make a suggestion to this effect".

Biological weapons are not science fiction. The use of disease as a weapon is a real and potent threat. Bioweapons have struck or stalked us since ancient times. Designed for military use or terrorist attacks, biological weapons kill or injure human beings, animals and plants. In their impact, they are as deadly as nuclear weapons, or even deadlier. They hit and disable combatants and civilians alike. They do not distinguish between friend and foe. Their vicious fury strikes massively and indiscriminately and the death caused by them is gruesome.

Let me recapitulate some of the key articles of the Convention. The preamble, as I said earlier, says that the use of biological agents and toxin weapons is repugnant to the conscience of mankind. States parties to the Convention agree or undertake: under article I, never under any circumstances to acquire or retain biological weapons; under article II, to destroy or divert to peaceful purposes biological weapons and associated resources prior to joining the Convention; under article III, not to transfer, or in any way assist, encourage or induce anyone else to acquire or retain biological weapons; under article IV, to take any national measures necessary to implement the provisions of the BWC domestically; under article V, to consult bilaterally and multilaterally to solve any problems with the implementation of the BWC; under article VI, to request the Security Council to investigate alleged breaches of the BWC and to comply with its subsequent decisions; under article VII, to assist States which have been exposed to a danger as a result of a violation of the BWC; and under article X, to do all of the aforementioned in a way that encourages the peaceful uses of biological science and technology.

Biological warfare and bioterrorism involve the deliberate cause or spread of disease by biological agents used as a weapon. Such weapons have the potential to cause immense human harm. My *PowerPoint* slide lists some of the agents here, and also incidents going back to ancient times: the sixth century, the fourteenth century, the fifteenth century, the First World War, and then we have a landmark, when the Geneva Protocol was adopted in 1925. The slides show instances of its use and research on it from the 1930s well into the 1960s. In 1972, the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention was signed, and it has now been ratified by 155 States. Recent incidents include: salmonella, sarin in 1995, anthrax in 2001 and 2002, avian influenza in recent years, the scare of a ricin conspiracy in 2003 and one instance in the Pankisi Gorge in Georgia in 2002. Here, results were different from initial claims.

What is the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission's advice for the Sixth Review Conference? It says, first, that it should reaffirm common understandings reached at previous Review Conferences and take action on all subjects addressed at Convention meetings since 2003. Secondly, States should ensure the more frequent reassessment of the implications of scientific and technological developments, reaffirm that all undertakings under article I of the BWC apply to such developments and reaffirm that all developments in the life sciences both fall within the scope of the BWC and that all such development for hostile purposes are prohibited by the Convention.

We have four challenges to meet: universal adherence to the Convention; the threat of terrorists or non-State actors gaining access to biological weapons; the immense potential of the life sciences to be tapped in the right manner; and the need to strengthen compliance with the Convention.

Regarding adherence to the BWC, let me tell the First Committee that we need to universalize the Convention, which at the moment has 155 States parties and 16 signatories. There are 23 States which have neither signed nor ratified. We should work towards universal compliance before 2011. The Sixth Review Conference should be a starting point for that effort. The European Union has already committed resources for this undertaking.

In his report "Uniting against terrorism" Secretary-General Kofi Annan has given us a strategy of five Ds: dissuasion, denial, deterrence, development and defence. He has also suggested the establishment of a forum that would bring together all the key stakeholders.

Regarding new scientific developments, life scientists have to become more aware of how their work can impinge on the BWC's legal and ethical norms against bioweapons. New vaccines, intended for instance to cure Alzheimer's disease, can be used for harmful purposes. Scientists are increasingly getting used to the idea of inviting enhanced scrutiny and peer observation. But that responsibility does not stop at the door of scientists. Governments and relevant agencies should always be in a position to monitor scientific advances that may lead to the production of bioweapons that are resistant to known medicines and to develop effective measures against them.

Codes of conduct are difficult to formulate. Many life sciences deal with dual-use materials and technologies. Scientists and administrators should be involved in the development, adoption and review of codes of conduct. These codes should be simple, clear and broad in scope and compatible with national legislation and regulatory controls, and they should contribute to national implementation measures.

Regarding the intersessional process, the meetings that took place between 2003 and 2005 addressed the following subjects: national implementation, security and oversight of pathogens, capabilities for responding to and investigating alleged uses of biological weapons, mechanisms for disease surveillance and response and codes of conduct for scientists.

Some lessons learned were that discussions that are not expected to lead to binding commitments are more collegial, cooperative and constructive; States parties and all other actors learn more. They raise awareness; they are less polemical; and they keep the focus on the BWC and make it responsive to contemporary developments. Side discussions serve as building blocks that States parties can use for possible agreements when they are ready to do so; they also work as catalysts for agreements. There is a growing sense among States that the Sixth Review Conference should decide on an intersessional calendar from 2007 to 2010.

An object lesson is that we have to be aware of the dangers posed by lone disaffected scientists or lurking bioterrorists.

Compliance hinges on intent. Strong national legislation and administrative measures are critical to coordinated and coherent implementation of the Convention. Precautions should be taken to ensure that research in biodefence programmes has a defensive orientation, is amenable to scientific oversight and conforms to the BWC.

It is too early to give a definitive account of what will be on the table at the Review Conference. In any case, it is not my role to dictate the menu; I am a servant of the process. But here are some of the suggestions that I would like to make: we should have a concise document, which should be easily understandable; we need to record our understandings and commitments in a way that communicates them, not only to the States parties, but also to the media, the scientific community, industry and the general public. That is important to ensure that the struggle against biological weapons is a shared effort across Governments, commerce and civil society. It is also important for the promotion and development of the peaceful applications of biological sciences and technology.

It is important for us to recapture and reaffirm, very briefly, core elements of the Convention and previous understandings reached by States parties. Because of the phenomenal advances in the life sciences, it will be both prudent and desirable to state that the Convention applies to all relevant scientific and technological developments. It would also be useful to recall the understanding that the Convention implicitly prohibits the use of biological weapons.

The Chairperson: I am obliged to interrupt the speaker. There is a great deal of noise in the room. I would request members to respect our speaker and try to be quieter. Members should take their places, or should leave the room if consultations are necessary.

Mr. Khan (Biological Weapons Convention Review Conference): I am glad that my presentation has stimulated several parallel discussions; there are lots of bilateral discussions going on.

With regard to article X, our security measures should not impede, but should enable and support, the peaceful application of biological science and

technology for human development through cooperation and exchanges. We must review what was done in the recent past; I have talked about that.

We also have some elements relating to what could go into the outcome document. Common themes are already emerging. I have heard delegations express interest in proposals relating to the following areas: an intersessional calendar of meetings and activities on agreed topics for the period 2007-2010; confidence-building measures; the universalization of the Convention; new scientific and technological developments; scientific and technological cooperation and exchanges; bioterrorism; compliance and verification; coordination with other organizations; and implementation support arrangements for the Convention, inter alia, to run a new intersessional process.

That list is indicative. The States parties are the ultimate arbiters of the substance and content of the outcome document. The subjects to which I referred could be used to develop the document.

We will take a two-pronged approach. We will undertake an article-by-article review of the Convention, and many issues which fall naturally under one or other of the articles of the Convention can be dealt with in that review. We will also have an opportunity for a more thematic consideration to deal with those issues that by their very nature cut across several articles of the Convention. We retain the flexibility to manage our work as the Conference proceeds.

We have a very competent Bureau. The Committee of the Whole, under the capable chairmanship of Ambassador Doru Costea of Romania, will devote itself to the article-by-article review. As the Committee of the Whole proceeds with this work, I would propose the convening of informal working groups, as needed, to address any issues that appear to be more suited to a thematic approach.

Once the various proposals have been sufficiently developed and refined through those two complementary avenues, I suggest that we convene the Drafting Committee, under the equally capable chairmanship of Mr. Knut Langeland of Norway, to draw the threads together and produce a concise, coherent and cohesive outcome document. We will have not a sequential, but a simultaneous, approach. We are lucky to have Mr. Tim Caughley as the Secretary General. Mr. Richard Lennane, the Secretary, is helping out with the entire process, and he is being assisted by Mr. Piers Millet.

What we need is synergy, not a trade-off. What can States parties do? They should prepare concise proposals and share them with others. They should meet within their own groups and with other principal interlocutors. They should prepare their ministries to help out with universal adherence and implementation. They should sensitize top decision-makers to the importance of the BWC. They should continue dialogue with industry, international organizations, academia, the media and non-governmental organizations. They should touch base with other capitals before going to Geneva. It is our collective responsibility to develop good interpersonal chemistry among negotiators. We should ensure good conference management. Above all, I would say, "Be in a good mood when you go to Geneva, and go to Geneva to succeed".

I have spelled out what the median point could be — I will not belabour the point, because I have already touched on most of these issues. Finally, I would like to say that there is no silver bullet. There is a lot of heavy lifting involved, and we will have to do it collectively.

I would like to ask members of the First Committee — those who are listening to me — to give their views to me. Ask questions; make observations; give guidance. The Chairperson, her gavel and the red light will determine how much time you have to do all of this.

The Chairperson: It is now my intention to suspend the meeting in order to provide the Committee with the opportunity to have an interactive discussion with our guest speaker in the form of an informal question and answer session.

The meeting was suspended at 3.35 p.m. and resumed at 3.45 p.m.

The Chairperson: I will now give the floor to delegations wishing to make statements on today's thematic subject. I would invite delegations to first make statements on the subject of other weapons of mass destruction. After we have concluded that subject, we will move to the subject of outer space. Delegations are also welcome to combine the two subjects.

Mr. Kahilvoto (Finland): I am speaking on behalf of the European Union (EU). The acceding countries Bulgaria and Romania; the candidate countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia; and the European Free Trade Association countries Norway and Liechtenstein, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this declaration.

The European Union is guided by its commitment to uphold, implement and strengthen the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation treaties and agreements. Meeting the challenge of proliferation risks constitutes a key element in the European Union's external relations.

The European Union strategy against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction commits the Union to act with resolve, using all instruments and policies at its disposal to prevent, deter, halt and, where possible, eliminate proliferation programmes of concern worldwide.

The Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) have an essential role in countering the threat of chemical and biological weapons. Together with other key multilateral agreements, they provide a basis for the international community's disarmament and non-proliferation efforts, which contribute to international confidence, stability and peace, including the fight against terrorism. We urge States that are not parties to those treaties to adhere to them and join the mainstream, and we also urge all States to meet their obligations under Security Council resolutions 1540 (2004) and 1673 (2006). We continue to urge all those States that are parties to the treaties to take all necessary steps to implement their obligations under those treaties and the two resolutions mentioned earlier, including in relation to enacting penal legislation. The EU stands ready to assist to that end when requested to do so.

The Union believes that control of emerging technology will continue to be an issue of considerable concern in the area of chemical and biological weapons. The potential for the illicit use of such technologies has been specifically mentioned in scientific literature and highlights the need to monitor technological developments in respect of emerging processes and related equipment with potential use in chemical and biological weapons programmes. We intend to be active in that area.

Cooperation with other countries to reduce and eliminate weapons of mass destruction within the framework of the Global Partnership initiative is a part of the European Union strategy and its Common Position on the NPT. The EU underlines the relevance of the G-8 Partnership initiatives to weapons of mass destruction-related disarmament and non-proliferation efforts.

The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention is particularly topical at this time, as the Sixth Review Conference of the Convention will be taking place soon, in November and December. The EU considers the Convention a key component of the international disarmament and non-proliferation framework and the cornerstone of efforts to prevent biological agents and toxins from ever being developed and used as weapons. Our efforts are aimed at strengthening this Convention further, and we remain committed to the development of measures to verify compliance with the Convention in the longer term.

The EU will promote a successful outcome of the BTWC Review Conference by contributing to a full review of the operation of the Convention, including the implementation of the undertakings of the States parties under the Convention. The EU is ready to do its part in building consensus for a substantive outcome, on the basis of the framework established by previous Review Conferences.

We will promote, inter alia, the following essential issues: universal adherence of all States to the Convention; full compliance with obligations under the Convention and their effective implementation by all States Parties; national implementation measures and control over pathogenic micro-organisms and toxins in the framework of the Convention; working towards devising effective mechanisms to strengthen and verify compliance with the BTWC; efforts to enhance transparency through the increased exchange of information among States parties, including through annual information exchanges among them; compliance with the obligations undertaken under Security Council resolutions 1540 (2004) and 1673 (2006), in particular to eliminate the risk of biological

or toxin weapons being acquired or used for terrorist purposes; the G-8 Global Partnership programmes; and decisions on further action on the work undertaken to date during the previous intersessional programme.

The Union will support a further intersessional work programme before the next Review Conference, which should be held no later than 2011. We will contribute to identifying specific areas and procedures for further progress under that work programme. We have submitted working papers in which our views and suggestions are elaborated on in detail.

The Union is fully prepared to play a constructive role in ensuring that our joint efforts lead to meaningful and practical results at the Conference. We support the efforts of the President-designate of the Conference to that effect.

While preparing for the Review Conference, the EU is taking practical measures to promote the universalization and effective national implementation of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, including regional workshops and assistance on relevant legal and technical aspects. That is being done through our Joint Action, giving implementation to some elements of our weapons of mass destruction strategy. In parallel with our Joint Action, we have also adopted an Action Plan in which the EU member States undertook to submit confidence-building measures returns to the United Nations each year, as well as to consider and volunteer expertise to the Secretary-General in helping him update the lists of experts and laboratories on which he may call for investigation of the alleged use of chemical or biological weapons.

We welcome the fact that the resolution on the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy adopted by the General Assembly on 6 September last encouraged the Secretary-General to update the roster of experts and laboratories as well as the technical guidelines and procedures available to him. More generally, regarding the exchange of information, including confidence-building measures, we also welcome the new BTWC Internet site, set up by the Department for Disarmament Affairs, as a valuable tool.

The EU acknowledges the progress made towards the universalization of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), a unique disarmament and non-proliferation instrument. We fully support the organization that is ensuring the implementation of the CWC and compliance with its demands, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Our support for the OPCW extends to very practical cooperation, thus giving immediate and practical implementation to some elements of the EU strategy against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. That practical support is focused on the promotion of the universality of the CWC, support for implementation of the CWC by the States parties, and international cooperation in the field of chemical activities.

The EU believes that the CWC must be strictly applied. One of the most important features of the CWC is the obligation for possessors of chemical weapons to destroy their stockpiles by specified deadlines. We continue to urge such possessors to take every possible step to meet those deadlines. In supporting that aim, the EU — and, bilaterally, several of its member States — has provided assistance to Russia. The EU underlines also the necessity for all States parties to implement in their own legislation the Convention's provisions, as per article VII.

We would recall that States acceding to or ratifying and implementing the CWC can be provided assistance by the OPCW to comply fully with the provisions of the Convention. We would like also to reiterate here our offer of assistance as communicated to all States parties by the Director-General of the OPCW.

The EU believes that the verification regime implemented by the OPCW is an essential means of deterring non-compliance with the Convention and of increasing transparency, confidence and international security. Within that regime, challenge inspections remain a valid tool, and the EU believes that the Technical Secretariat must be well prepared and equipped to conduct such inspections. Furthermore, the EU supports the efforts being made to maintain its readiness.

Turning to the issue of ballistic missiles, in addressing the issue of ballistic missiles capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction, the European Union supports the Hague Code of Conduct, which, since its inception in November 2002, has become an important instrument for the promotion of transparency and confidence-building and a practical contribution against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. In particular, we continue to underline the

fact that the Code constitutes the most concrete initiative in the fight against the proliferation of ballistic missiles and a fundamental step towards effectively addressing the problem of missile proliferation from a multilateral global perspective.

We are pleased that 124 countries have already subscribed to the Code and that additional countries are seriously considering taking that step soon. However, the strength of the Code depends on the full implementation of the transparency measures foreseen by all subscribing States. The EU therefore urges all subscribing States to fully implement the Code's transparency measures.

Here, I would like to take the opportunity to briefly address the question of outer space activities. The EU is aware of the growing involvement of the international community in outer space activities aimed at development and progress and of the increasing dependence on outer space for economic and industrial development, as well as for security. We are actively cooperating in various space initiatives. Such activities should be developed in a peaceful environment. An arms race in outer space must be prevented. Such prevention is an essential condition for the strengthening of strategic stability and the promotion of international cooperation aimed at the free exploration and use of outer space by all States for peaceful purposes.

We recognize a growing convergence of views on the elaboration of measures to strengthen transparency, confidence and security in the peaceful uses of outer space. We also appreciated the careful consideration of the issue of preventing an arms race in outer space this year by the Conference on Disarmament. We consider that to be an important matter to be dealt with in the Conference, in a way that is subject to agreement by all.

To conclude, I would like to refer to the value of international public discussion that contributes over the long term to the creation, universalization and effective implementation of international commitments relating to weapons of mass destruction. Among other things, such discussion has contributed strongly to the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWTC), which in effect represent the universal perception of the total unacceptability of biological and chemical weapons. The everyday relevance of that contribution has been well illustrated — for example, in the discussion on the codes of conduct for scientists in the context of the BTWC.

Mr. Da Rocha Paranhos (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have two statements to make: one on biological weapons and one on chemical weapons. I will begin with biological weapons.

I am taking the floor on behalf of the States parties of MERCOSUR: Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela, and the associated States Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru.

The countries members of MERCOSUR and associated States reaffirm our resolve to contribute to the strengthening of the Biological Weapons Convention. It is clear to us that multilateralism is the best way to strengthen the disarmament and non-proliferation regimes regarding weapons of mass destruction. We recall the Declaration on Security in the Americas, adopted at the special security conference held in Mexico City in October 2003, and resolution 2107 of the General Assembly of the Organization of American States, adopted on 7 June 2005, in which the States of the hemisphere declared their objective of making the Americas a region free of biological and chemical weapons.

Likewise, we recall the Declaration on the South American Zone of Peace and Cooperation, signed in Guayaquil on 27 July 2002, in which the heads of State of South America banned the siting, development, manufacture, possession, deployment, testing and use of all types of weapons of mass destruction, including biological and toxin weapons, as well as their transit through the countries of the region, in accordance with the relevant international conventions.

The countries of MERCOSUR and associated countries express once again the importance of establishing and strengthening efficient national monitoring regimes as an important part of the collective effort to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. Furthermore, we emphasize the role of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) in the context of multilateral regimes to that end.

I should like to highlight the importance of universalization of the Convention and of progress in its implementation, which presupposes efficient follow-up and support mechanisms. Likewise, we

understand that it is essential to develop instruments to strengthen international assistance and cooperation and to strengthen confidence-building measures, including follow-up and support mechanisms with regard to the Convention.

In that connection, we stress that universalization of the Convention and the withdrawal of all reservations to the 1925 Geneva Protocol are important steps towards the fulfilment of the purpose of that instrument and the strengthening of the ban against the use of biological weapons. Moreover, we believe it is essential to promote scientific cooperation and the transfer of technology as incentives for universalization of the Convention.

The countries of MERCOSUR and associated countries agree that it is important to provide the Convention with a verification mechanism. Likewise, in the absence of an international verification mechanism, confidence-building measures are necessary for better and more effective implementation of the Convention's provisions.

The countries of MERCOSUR and the associated countries believe it is essential to continue the work of strengthening the Convention and its implementation beyond the Sixth Review Conference. In that connection, we support the establishment of an administrative unit to provide technical support to States parties. In addition, we urge that the work of the Convention should enjoy broad participation by civil society, the private sector, the scientific community and the relevant international organizations in their respective spheres of competence.

Finally, we express our expectation that the Convention's Sixth Review Conference will formulate recommendations and adopt decisions with a view to strengthening the multilateral legal framework to eliminate any possibility of the existence of biological weapons and to prevent the development of biological and toxin agents as weapons of mass destruction.

I shall now proceed with my statement on behalf of MERCOSUR with regard to chemical weapons. I am again speaking on behalf of the States parties of MERCOSUR: Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela, and the associated States Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru.

At the outset, I should like to reaffirm the commitment of the countries members of MERCOSUR and associated countries to the objectives of disarmament and non-proliferation set out in the Chemical Weapons Convention. MERCOSUR reaffirms its goal of achieving full implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), on weapons of mass destruction and non-State actors. We commend the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) for its efforts to achieve universalization of the Convention. To date, those efforts have resulted in the ratification of the Convention by 180 States.

We, the countries of MERCOSUR and associated countries, believe that cooperation among States parties is essential not only to achieve national implementation — including through greater cooperation on the part of developed countries — but also to ensure support for efficient OPCW programmes to develop the scientific capacities of professionals in the sphere of the peaceful use of chemical activity.

We attach particular importance to efforts to improve the Convention's verification and monitoring mechanisms. At the same time, the countries of MERCOSUR and associated countries believe it is essential to intensify cooperation to prevent or punish behaviour that is contrary to the purposes of the Convention. Such cooperation can be provided through support by States parties for the development of legislation permitting the establishment of appropriate monitoring mechanisms, through assistance in the event of a chemical attack and through international cooperation in the criminal field.

Furthermore, we reiterate our appeal to countries possessing chemical weapons to destroy their arsenals. Delay in the destruction of those arsenals is an element that can affect the credibility of the important work being carried out under the Convention.

The countries members of MERCOSUR and associated countries consider that the Convention is an essential tool in the fight against the proliferation of chemical weapons and in efforts to prevent the use of those weapons for terrorist purposes. We thus call for greater cooperation among the States of every region in order to improve border and customs controls, inter alia by training national personnel charged with those tasks.

Ms. Frost (Canada): This statement will address chemical weapons and biological weapons. This debate comes at an important time in the international security

agenda. We must ensure that our two legally binding mechanisms, the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), remain as pertinent as ever to our security.

Next month, States parties to the BTWC will convene in Geneva for the Sixth Review Conference. Ambassador Masood Khan of Pakistan, the President-designate of the Conference, has been working diligently to create the proper environment and conditions for success. We thank Ambassador Khan for his participation today. It is clear that he has established reasonable objectives, and we fully share his commitment to achieving a positive outcome. We urge all States parties to give him their unqualified support in these efforts. There have been significant contributions made to that end. Japan, for example, hosted a conference in February of this year aimed at developing an open dialogue on ways and means to strengthen the norms and implementation of the Convention.

Canada has likewise contributed. We have put forward a package of measures to build accountability within the Convention. Our point of departure is that States Parties to the Convention are accountable to one another in implementing the obligations they each have accepted in becoming States parties and in adopting commitments undertaken together in subsequent Review Conferences. From this perspective, we have identified four areas in which efforts to strengthen the BTWC could be further pursued: national implementation, confidence-building measures, implementation support and annual meetings.

While the measures we are proposing enjoy wide support among States parties, they are not meant to be exhaustive. We note that other States parties, following a similar approach, have put forward important concrete proposals of their own. We should examine carefully all efforts and ideas that will take us towards our common goal of a strengthened Convention.

We are working closely with other States parties in the run-up to the Review Conference. Through such collaboration, we hope to bring increased weight and focus to proposals that build on our accountability framework. Most recently, Canada co-sponsored a conference at Wilton Park in the United Kingdom that brought together a broad range of Government, private sector and academic experts to examine issues surrounding biological weapons and chemical weapons disarmament and non-proliferation.

Turning to the subject of chemical weapons disarmament, we must not become complacent. While the CWC has become a model of a verifiable disarmament agreement, it still faces important challenges. Next month, and again in December, States parties will be asked to address the question of extensions to destruction deadlines. While we might understand the circumstances that have contributed to the necessity for some possessor States to invoke the extension provisions of the Convention, we do not easily accept this request. Even this five-year, one-time-only extension may not be sufficient to ensure the total destruction of all existing stockpiles of chemical weapons. We therefore encourage possessor States to redouble their efforts to rid the world of the threat of chemical weapons by destroying their stockpiles as quickly as feasible.

The Chemical Weapons Convention will have its second Review Conference in April 2008, some 18 months from now. It is not too soon to begin taking stock of the Convention's implementation and examining how States parties might best ensure its continuing relevance as a key element of our security.

I would be remiss if I did not compliment the extensive efforts by Director-General Rogelio Pfirter and the Technical Secretariat of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in pursuing an effective programme of universalization for the Convention.

With the recent accession of its one hundred-eightieth member, the CWC is approaching true universality, thanks to the dedicated work of many people. We will continue to support such efforts until every country has become a State party and is fully implementing its obligations under the Convention.

The arms control and disarmament agenda has suffered disappointments in recent years. We have not been able to achieve the objectives we have set for ourselves. We cannot let this happen again with the BTWC Review Conference. Canada is committed to working closely with Ambassador Khan and all the other States parties to help build a more secure world for all.

Mr. MacKay (New Zealand): I too would thank Ambassador Masood Khan for the very comprehensive

overview that he gave of his plans for the upcoming Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) Review Conference. We see the Review Conference as an opportunity for States to agree on practical implementation measures to take forward the work of the BWC. We are confident that the proposed schedule will facilitate a comprehensive review of the treaty as well as encompassing forward-looking elements.

We are, essentially, looking for ways to ensure that the BWC remains relevant in a dynamic biotechnology environment. To that end, we support the development of an intersessional process which implements work already done on overarching codes of conduct and scientific cooperation and which is flexible enough to accommodate work on any new issues in the Convention's implementation that may arise during the course of the next review period. A strengthened implementation support capacity would result in concrete gains for the Convention's work, particularly in the fields of national implementation and confidence-building measures.

New Zealand also attaches high importance to the work under the Chemical Weapons Convention, and to the implementation work done by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. The eleventh session of the Conference of the States Parties to that Convention will provide an opportunity to evaluate progress. For our part, we will be emphasizing that all chemical weapons stockpiles must be destroyed by 2012, the deadline in the Convention. We will also continue to focus on universalization and implementation of the Convention, particularly in the Pacific, as well as on improving the current methodology for selecting sites for inspections. New Zealand is also making a practical contribution to the destruction of chemical weapons through our contribution to the Group of Eight Global Partnership in Shchuch'ye, Russia.

While I have the floor, let me briefly address the disarmament aspects of outer space. It is in all our interests to preserve space for the development of peaceful technologies and scientific exploration. Preventing the weaponization of outer space is fundamental to safeguarding our ability to access space resources, both now and in the future. New Zealand supports work towards a more comprehensive legal framework regulating the demilitarization of outer space. Arguments that there is no current arms race in space and therefore no need to address this issue ignore the preventive benefits of adopting a precautionary approach. As an interim step, in our view, there is an important role for transparency and confidence-building measure with regard to outer space.

Mr. Cheng Jingye (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): My statement relates to the issue of outer space.

Next year marks the fortieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Outer Space Treaty. Over the decades, the Treaty — the first important step taken by the international community to safeguard the security of outer space — has played a significant role in ensuring the peaceful uses of outer space. Given the rapid development of outer space science and technology, the international community is faced with the pressing task of strengthening the effectiveness and universality of the Outer Space Treaty so as to better preserve the sustainable peace and security of outer space. This is an issue which we need to consider, explore and address through appropriate and proactive measures.

Over the past five decades, humankind has come a long way in the exploration and utilization of outer space, and the significant achievements thus made have helped to advance human civilization. Today, outer space, like the land, the ocean and the sky, has become an integral part of our lives — one on which we increasingly depend.

During the twenty-first century, a growing number of countries will take part in and benefit from the exploration and utilization of outer space. More than ever, the sustainable peace of outer space is closely linked with each and every country's security, development and prosperity. As the Chinese President, Mr. Hu Jintao, pointed out on the occasion of the thirty-sixth Scientific Assembly of the Committee on Space Research (COSPAR), outer space is the common heritage of humankind; the exploration, peaceful utilization and exploitation of outer space is the common right of all peoples; and ensuring that outer space remains peaceful and clean is the common obligation of humankind.

Every year the General Assembly adopts a draft resolution on this issue by an overwhelming majority — a fact that explicitly reflects the common aspirations and determination of the peoples of the world. What is worrying, however, is that since the exploitation of outer space began, the spectre of the weaponization of and an arms race in outer space has

been haunting the international community. Given the continuous development of space science and technology, this danger looms larger with each passing day.

A world free from outer space weapons is no less important than a world free from weapons of mass destruction. History has repeatedly shown that prevention is more effective and less costly than cure. We have already encountered many obstacles on the difficult path towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Humankind must not be allowed to sink into the morass of the weaponization of outer space as a result of our inaction now.

To conclude a new international legal instrument to close the loopholes in the existing legal framework relating to outer space is the only effective way of coping with the challenges of the weaponization of outer space. For 10 consecutive years, the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva established and re-established its Ad Hoc Committee on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, accumulating rich experience in dealing with the issue of outer space in an appropriate manner.

We note with satisfaction that this year the Conference on Disarmament conducted an important, meaningful, structured and focused debate on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. During the debate, a majority of States members of the Conference expressed their concerns about the trend towards the weaponization of and an arms race in outer space, and voiced their support for the Conference on Disarmament's engaging in substantive work on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Many countries sent experts to the discussions, and several countries — including China, the Russian Federation and Canada — submitted working documents on the issue. During the debate, in-depth and extensive exchanges of views from the political, legal, technological and financial angles on issues concerning a future legal instrument — including definitions, scope, verification, confidence-building measures and the security of real assets in outer space — were conducted among all parties. The debate had a fruitful outcome, and showed that the international community's awareness of the importance of preventing the weaponization of outer space is increasing and that common ground on concluding a new legal instrument is expanding.

It is also noteworthy that, in March this year, China, the Russian Federation, Canada and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, as well as the Simons Foundation of Canada, once again co-sponsored an international conference on outer space. At that conference, the theme of which was "Building the architecture for sustainable space security", participants engaged in heated and frank discussions on topics such as threats to the peaceful uses of outer space, approaches for ensuring space security, et cetera. The many constructive proposals and ideas that were put forward will serve as useful references for future work in the Conference on Disarmament.

China believes that the Conference on Disarmament should re-establish an ad hoc committee on the prevention of an arms race in outer space at an early date so that substantive work can be conducted on the issue of the prevention of the weaponization of outer space. That would be the best way to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the Outer Space Treaty. We are looking forward to the early achievement of that goal.

China is ready to join with all other States in continuing our unremitting efforts to that end.

Mr. Streuli (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I would like to thank Ambassador Masood Khan for his presentation, which held my delegation's attention. I am pleased to work with him and look forward to working under his presidency during the next Review Conference of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention.

During the general debate, I stressed the fact that biological weapons are a source of great concern for my country. Indeed, knowledge and technology in the area of biotechnology and genetic sciences are evolving rapidly, in both the civilian and the military fields, with the consequence that there is a growing risk of abuse. In the view of Switzerland, the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) is the essential framework, allowing us to hold discussions aimed at dealing with and preventing, in a coordinated fashion, the biological threat — whether it comes from a State or from elsewhere. We therefore appeal to all States that have not yet signed or ratified the BTWC or the 1925 Geneva Protocol to do so soon as possible.

We also appeal once again to all States members of the BTWC to find common ground during the next Review Conference. In particular, we would like a follow-up process to be established that would make it possible to strengthen and ensure respect for the Convention.

Switzerland will certainly make an active and constructive contribution to the success of the Review Conference. From that perspective, my delegation is drafting a working document on confidence-building measures, and to that end we are holding informal consultations.

I would like to take this opportunity also to reaffirm my country's commitment to the Convention on Chemical Weapons — the only disarmament treaty that bans an entire category of weapons of mass destruction and whose implementation is effective. Switzerland welcomes the progress achieved since its entry into force and actively supports the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). We are particularly pleased to note that, through the open-ended working group, delegations to the OPCW are already making preparations for the second Review Conference, which is to be held in 2008. We hope that cooperation will be as fruitful and constructive in the context of the Chemical Weapons Convention as it was with respect to the Biological Weapons Convention, which next month in Geneva will be the subject of a sixth Review Conference.

Mr. Luaces (United States of America): Over the past several decades, the use of outer space has become increasingly important to all aspects of international commerce, peace and security. The information revolution that has transformed the global economy depends to a very large extent on our collective advances in space, including in the fields of communications, navigation and remote sensing.

The increased importance of outer space to both commerce and national security has given rise to a number of concerns around the world, including the potential vulnerability of space systems to disruption from both natural and manmade sources.

The international community must recognize, as the United States does, that protection of space access is a key objective. We consider space capabilities to be vital to our national interests, whether these capabilities are in ground or space segments, which include the supporting links of such networks.

Space systems should be able to pass through, and operate in, space without interference. It is critical to preserve freedom of action in space, and the United States is committed to ensuring that our freedom of action in space remains unhindered. All countries should share this interest in unfettered access to and use of space and in dissuading or deterring others from impeding either access to or use of space for peaceful purposes or the development of capabilities intended to serve that purpose.

In that spirit, President Bush recently authorized a new national space policy that sets forth the guiding principles of United States space programmes and activities and is designed to re-energize our efforts to develop and maintain robust and effective space capabilities for civil, commercial and national security purposes.

The United States recognizes the critical importance of space access and use for our economy and our national security. This new policy statement reaffirms our longstanding commitment to ensuring peaceful access to and use of space.

The modern world relies upon this free right of passage in space. We all should be committed to that right, because to lose access to space would have profound consequences for the global economy and our everyday lives. Technology derived from our accomplishments in space touches nearly every aspect of everyday life. From cars to planes, from the farmer's crops to the soldier's battlefield awareness, space technology has had a far-reaching impact on our lives.

These are important principles to bear in mind. The danger against which we all must be vigilant is not some theoretical arms race in space but threats that would deny peaceful access to and use of space, especially ground-based space-denial capabilities intended to impede the free access to and use of space systems and services, because any satellite capable of manoeuvring can be used to destroy another satellite simply by physical collision. Space does not lend itself to an old-style "arms-control" approach. In fact, such an approach could be counterproductive if it were to create restrictions upon free access to space and erode the important principles of free transit and operations in space.

For these reasons, the United States opposes proposed negotiations on the so-called prevention of an arms race in outer space. Indeed, the international

community should oppose, and the United States will oppose, the development of new legal regimes or other restrictions that seek to prohibit or limit access to or use of space.

Our views on this matter are clear and easily summarized.

First, there is no arms race in space.

Secondly, there is no prospect of an arms race in space.

Thirdly, the United States will continue to protect its access to and use of space.

The international community must recognize and act upon its vital interest in preserving free access to and use of this crucial medium. Yet our cooperation should not be limited to imposing restrictions on free access to and use of space. We also should continue to work together to advance international space cooperation to improve the global community's use of space.

The United States already has a number of efforts under way to help safeguard and improve the peaceful uses of outer space for all. For example, the United States provides information on objects in space through a public-domain website. We have led the way in negotiating guidelines for mitigating the dangers to space operations presented by orbital debris. We also have extended assistance to other space-faring nations by offering help in collision avoidance, such as during China's first two manned space launches.

In addition, in order to help avoid the damaging effects that solar weather can have on radio frequency communications, we provide free information to all through a website of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration on solar radiation storms and radio blackouts. These are just a few examples of what the United States is doing to help make space safer and more productive for all States.

The international community should follow the example of the United States and explore additional ways to cooperate. Our new national space policy recognizes the importance of international cooperation and continues to emphasize its importance. In fact, this is the core of the United States' national space policy. We recognize our vital national interest in unhindered access to and use of space, and we are firmly committed to protecting it. At the same time, we remain dedicated to improving the ways in which all States can benefit from this invaluable medium of space in service of economic development, scientific advancement and international peace and security.

Mr. Chang Dong-hee (Republic of Korea): I thank Ambassador Masood Khan, President-designate of the forthcoming Sixth Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) Review Conference, for his excellent presentation, which was very useful and informative. I look forward to working closely with him during the Review Conference.

The Biological Weapons Convention remains the fundamental legal and normative foundation for our collective endeavours to prohibit and prevent the use of biological and bio-toxic weapons. However, as stated by Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who was quoted by Ambassador Khan in his presentation, with advances in biotechnology and the life sciences as well as their widespread availability, there is a greater risk that proliferators, both State and non-State, might take advantage of loopholes inherent in the BWC. In the light of the potential threats posed by these developments, there is an urgent need to reinforce the BWC. This is indeed imperative if we wish to address these new challenges adequately, while still maximizing the benefits of biotechnology for peaceful uses.

That is why my delegation attaches particular importance to the upcoming Sixth Review Conference, to be held in November. Following the failure of the previous Review Conference, in 2001, my delegation hopes that the Conference this year will provide us with a fresh opportunity to assess how the Convention in its entirety has been working for the past 10 years. Through a comprehensive article-by-article review of the Convention, we should identify the areas in which additional work and cooperation among States parties are needed. States parties should explore ways to ensure full implementation and to enhance the effectiveness of the Convention.

In this regard, our discussions over the past three years attest to the value of intersessional work, which we believe should continue beyond the Sixth Review Conference. Indeed, it would be constructive for the intersessional work to be conducted on a more regular and more formal basis. Proceeding in this way would ensure increased continuity between Review Conferences.

Moreover, we should also seriously consider ways to further promote universal adherence and national implementation of the Convention, particularly of the confidence-building measures it sets out. To that end, the Republic of Korea is drawing up a working paper on the universalization of the Convention, which we will circulate in due course. Our efforts to ensure the prohibition of biological weapons, combat their proliferation and secure the viability of the BWC regime demand a successful outcome of the upcoming Review Conference. My delegation calls on all States parties to show flexibility and take an open-minded approach so that we can achieve significant tangible results.

Turning to the matter of chemical weapons, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) is held in high regard by the international community as a model for disarmament and non-proliferation organizations. My delegation believes that the efforts of possessor States towards the non-discriminative destruction of their chemical weapons have greatly contributed to that positive appraisal. My delegation is confident that all possessor States are fully committed to making their best efforts to complete the destruction of their chemical weapons stockpiles as soon as possible. We understand that stockpile destruction may be delayed by domestic factors such as environmental protection requirements and concerns for the safety of workers involved in the destruction process. Nevertheless, we note that the Convention clearly stipulates that in no case shall the deadline for a State party to complete its destruction of all chemical weapons be extended beyond April 2012. We urge all possessor States, without any exception, to do their utmost to meet that obligation.

To achieve the fundamental goal of the Convention, namely the total destruction of all chemical weapons worldwide, universal accession is obviously necessary, and this has been a top priority for the OPCW. In this regard, my delegation greatly appreciates the efforts of the OPCW Director-General and Technical Secretariat to achieve the goal, set at the tenth Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), of increasing the number of States parties to 180 by the end of this year.

With some countries still remaining outside the Convention, our challenges have not yet been overcome. As long as those countries choose to remain outside the framework of the CWC, the serious threat of chemical weapons is still with us. We therefore urge those countries to respond to the call from the OPCW immediately and without conditions. We also encourage the OPCW to strengthen its efforts to persuade those countries to participate in the Convention as soon as possible.

As for national implementation of the CWC, my delegation appreciates the progress that has been made to ensure full implementation of the Convention by States parties and commends the Technical Secretariat for the assistance it has provided. However, we must not become complacent. In the light of the increasing threat of terrorist attacks involving weapons of mass destruction, States parties should be especially vigilant in their full implementation of the Convention to ensure that no chemical weapons fall into the wrong hands. We urge all States parties to adopt national CWC implementation measures as soon as possible.

Mr. Meyer (Canada): Let me first, Madam Chairperson, express my appreciation for your efforts to try to organize our thematic debate this afternoon by separating out two very distinct cluster topics, the first being on other weapons of mass destruction, under which we normally discuss biological and chemical weapons issues, and the second being missiles and outer space. I think it is very much in keeping with the reform aims of the Committee that we extract more value and greater coherence from our thematic debate portion when we can stick to addressing one topic at a time. In that regard, I would hope that delegations could organize themselves in the future so that we do not mix, so to speak, the poisoned apples of biological weapons with the orbiting oranges of outer space.

My statement today is focused on outer space and the disarmament aspects thereof. The lack in recent years of an ad hoc committee on the prevention of an arms race in outer space at the Conference on Disarmament has not prevented some worthwhile discussion and proposals from being generated — proposals which we have a responsibility to consider and, where appropriate, to act upon.

Discussions held at the space security seminar organized by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research in March, the series of structured discussions in the Conference on Disarmament during its past session in June and discussion here in the First Committee, taken together, reinforce, in our view, the need to develop an

increasingly broad concept of space security that addresses not only the weaponization of outer space but also the broader military, environmental, commercial and civil dimensions of space.

When we talk about ensuring secure and sustainable access to and use of space for peaceful purposes, we are in fact using such a broad approach to space security. As we all draw ever-increasing benefits from space assets, Canada believes strongly that spacefaring and non-spacefaring nations alike share a stake and a responsibility in ensuring that human actions do not jeopardize the current and future benefits offered to us by outer space.

The Russian Federation is in favour of strengthening the multilateral bases for addressing the challenges of disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), in strict observance of international agreements in this area. We need to strengthen the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as we said yesterday and we attach great importance to the strict observance of the Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare (Geneva Protocol of 1925), the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC). The need for urgent action in the area of the destruction of chemical and the non-proliferation of biological weapons is driven today above all by the danger of their falling into the hands of terrorists.

We feel that the Geneva Protocol of 1925 is still very topical and current. Measures aimed at helping to strengthen its regime would include to remove reservations expressed by States when ratifying the document. Russia has withdrawn such reservations. We call on other parties to the Protocol to reject the use of chemical or biological weapons as a retaliatory measure.

We consider the CWC as a key element in the system of international security. In the more than ten years of its existence it has convincingly proven its importance in sparing the world of the most lethal form of weapons. It has been an effective instrument for curbing the proliferation of chemical weapons. It has also proven its positive potential for increasing cooperation in the peaceful use of technology and knowledge in the area of chemistry.

Russia abides by its disarmament obligations and is consistently implementing them. We are doing everything possible to complete the elimination of chemical arsenals within the deadlines provided for in the Convention. In September 2006, we put a third Russian chemical weapons destruction facility into operation. In the near future, we will cross an important threshold by having destroyed 10 per cent of the Russian stockpiles of toxic substances.

I need to stress that the task of destroying chemical weapons on the scale that Russia faces cannot be dealt with by one State alone. We are constantly expanding State financing for research programmes for the destruction of chemical weapons. At the same time, we would like to express our gratitude to all countries that have been giving assistance in the elimination of chemical arsenals. Such assistance is extremely important. Russia receives such helpful financial and technical assistance from the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Sweden, Finland, Norway, Italy, Poland, Switzerland, Canada, the Czech Republic, the European Union and New Zealand.

However, I should like to note that today we still have an acute problem of increasing the effectiveness of such actions. I would like to focus attention on the fact that the main assistance will be needed from 2006 to 2008, when we will be engaged in the most active phase of our construction of industrial facilities to destroy chemical weapons.

An important priority of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in The Hague is achieving the Convention's universality. Recently, in this room, the General-Director, Mr. Pfirter, noted that only 15 States remain outside the Convention and that the implementation of the Action Plan to promote universality will play a substantial role in expanding State participation.

The necessary element for the stable functioning of the CWC is the adoption by each Member State of national measures to implement the Convention's provisions. We are ready to give assistance to other States in developing national legislation and in sharing the experience that we have acquired. We have developed such cooperation within the Commonwealth of Independent States.

In the context of efforts to prevent the proliferation of biological weapons, we have

consistently supported the implementation of the regime established by the BWC. An important stage towards this end is the sixth Review Conference coming at the end of this year. We believe that the Review Conference should be a detailed review, article by article, of the operation of the Convention and the tangible steps to be taken during the next five-year period to enhance the effectiveness of its activities. We still feel that the most effective method for strengthening the Convention is the resumption of work of its verification mechanisms under a legally binding document. It would make it possible to implement effective and objective verification of the observance of the Convention by all States parties.

Without a consensus on this question, we would be in favour of continuing intersessional work, with annual meetings of experts and of States parties to the Convention. That approach worked well in the years 2003-2005.

An important measure helping to prevent the proliferation of biological weapons would be a further universalization of the BWC. Therefore, we call on States that have not yet done so to adhere to it.

In the context of non-proliferation of chemical and biological weapons, and, above all, the urgent need to prevent their falling into the hands of non-State actors, particularly terrorists, we need to attach prime importance to the full implementation by all States of the provisions of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). This resolution is aimed at creating at the national level developed legislative, law enforcement and organizational measures to ensure the safety, integrity and physical security not only of chemical weapons, but also materials associated with chemical and biological weapons, namely, dual-use materials and technologies.

The transfer of any of these weapons is not very likely and the main threat of proliferation is now to be found from the uncontrolled trafficking and the risk of the leakage of dual-use chemical and biological substances. In this connection, of particular importance are the provisions of resolution 1540 (2004) on the need to create and strengthen verification measures on export and trans-border transport of such materials. We actively support the work of the Security Council Committee set up under resolution 1540 (2004).

We view positively the draft resolutions proposed by Poland and Hungary in support of the CWC and the BWC and we feel that we can support them.

Mr. Rivasseau (France) (*spoke in French*): Permit me to congratulate you on your skilful leadership of our discussions. I would like to refer to the 1925 Geneva Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, which has 134 States Parties. The final declaration of a French-Swiss seminar on the occasion of the eightieth anniversary of that Protocol, held in Geneva in June 2005, called for withdrawal of all reservations to that Protocol. As you know, France is the depositary for that Protocol and withdrew its reservations in 1996. We consider that the Protocol's provisions have the force of customary law.

France would like to introduce a non-paper, which, of course, we would like to make available to delegations. I would like to read it out, because it is sufficiently short to do so.

> "The Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, opened for signature in Geneva on 17 June 1925 and for which France is the depositary, is the ancestor of the two pillars of current disarmament instruments: the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and the 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). Meeting both the needs of mankind and the aims of disarmament and non-proliferation, that Protocol continues to be current, especially in the biological sphere, where it is the only text to prohibit explicitly the use of biological weapons. The ancient date of the Protocol — last year was its eightieth anniversary — explains why certain States have not recently given great attention to this Protocol or to their status in relation to its provisions. In recent years, nonetheless, many States have withdrawn their reservations. Only 22 States maintain their reservations today, and those reservations are often incompatible with their obligations under the framework of the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention and the 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention.
>
> "France, therefore, invites all States Parties that made reservations when adhering to the Protocol

to re-consider in a constructive manner and to ensure the comprehensive prohibition of chemical and biological weapons the withdrawal of their reservations."

As general information, France is making available an Internet site that lists all the States Parties to the Protocol, as well as an updated official list of reservations. That information can be consulted at www.doc.diplomatie.gouv.fr/pacte under the section on multilateral treaties, France depositaire, tab number 15.

Ms. Millar (Australia): At the outset, I would like to extend my delegation's thanks to Ambassador Khan for his informative and useful presentations on the forthcoming Review Conference on the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC). The BWC Review Conference provides a vital opportunity for the international community to strengthen its defences against the proliferation of biological and toxin weapons. It is an opportunity that we can ill afford to squander; all the more so while the threat from bio-terrorism persists.

Australia has been a long-standing advocate for the full and effective implementation of the BWC — as we have been for other complimentary measures, including the Proliferation Security Initiative and the Australia Group. And so, we will approach the BWC Review Conference with clear aims to strengthen the Treaty and ensure its continuing relevance to the security needs of its parties. To this end, Australia will be encouraging States Parties to fulfil their obligations under the Convention and Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) to prohibit and prevent the development and production of biological agents and toxins.

Of particular importance is the need for States Parties to examine national implementation of the Convention. States need to have in place the necessary legislative, administrative and enforcement measures to ensure effective implementation of the BWC and confidence among its States Parties. With this in mind, Australia will propose that States Parties designate a national authority to coordinate domestic compliance with the BWC and act as a single liaison point for contact between States Parties. We will also encourage a close examination of the BWC confidence-building measures (CBMs). The CBMs are a vital transparency measure, but we must increase the participation in and the value of the CBM process to ensure its continued relevance in an environment of rapidly evolving security threats and technology.

National implementation of the BWC is vital to its continuing relevance. But we must also take care of the institution of the Convention itself. Australia has found the intersessional process since the fifth Review Conference to be valuable. We look to a decision this year on a further, focused intersessional process, leading to the Review Conference in 2011. Such a process should have practical benefits for implementation of the Convention and should meet the security needs of States Parties. Moreover, this process should be assisted by a continuation and enhancement of the support provided to States Parties through the BWC meetings Secretariat. Not only could such a unit assist with meetings, but it might also help in such areas as universalization and CBM management.

The BWC is strong, but we must do more to realise its universalization and strengthen its effectiveness against the spread of biological weapons. With this in mind, Australia will put forward an action plan for the universalization of the BWC at the Review Conference. The plan will offer clear and practical steps States Parties can take to encourage and assist States to join this vital convention.

Australia's action plan is just one example of the positive approach States Parties are taking to the Review Conference. Australia, with Japan, Canada, the Republic of Korea, Switzerland, Norway and New Zealand, has already begun preparation of papers on other issues. We welcome the contributions of the European Union and Latin American countries to prepare for the meeting. We sincerely hope that with such a positive approach, States Parties will make the most of the BWC Review Conference to strengthen global defences against the proliferation of biological and toxin weapons.

Ms. Leong (Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): Our statement will refer to the question of outer space. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela wishes to reiterate its full support for the designation of outer space as the common heritage of mankind and, in particular, for reserving its use for exclusively peaceful purposes. In this regard, we note with great concern the position of several countries in favour of the emplacement of various military systems in outer space of both offensive and defensive nature. That would endanger the collective security of mankind, in addition to

violating the principle, which considers this zone to be the common heritage of mankind, as established in the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies.

Our country has signed the Outer Space Treaty, the Rescue Agreement and the Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects. In addition to this, we are a party to other international instruments related to space, such as the (1963) Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water, an agreement with the International Telecommunications Satellite Organization (INTELSAT) and the International Telecommunications Union Convention. This is the legal framework that guides our international action in matters of outer space.

In this regard, we hope that the negotiations held within the Conference on Disarmament for the purpose of achieving an international instrument to prevent an arms race in outer space may reach completion and succeed. Furthermore, our country considers that States that possess an important technological capacity in space should renounce the emplacement of any military system, defensive or offensive, in outer space. They should also agree to furnish information about their activities in this regard. We support the adoption of more transparency measures and confidence-building measures in activities relating to outer space.

Venezuela is fully committed to the principles which promote the use of outer space exclusively for peaceful purposes. In November 2005, our Government authorized the establishment of the Foundation for the Venezuelan Space Centre. It was established on 3 February 2006. This foundation is aimed at the design, coordination and implementation of the policies of our executive branch dealing with the peaceful use of outer space, and will act as the national specialized decentralized agency in matters of air and space.

In this regard, we wish to emphasize the cooperation agreement for the implementation of the project on the peaceful use of space between our Government and the People's Republic of China, which provides for the acquisition, by Venezuela, of the Simón Bolívar satellite, and the establishment of a space centre within the country. This marks the beginning of our national experience beyond the Earth's skies through a State policy based on peaceful purposes and a social vision. This space cooperation agreement is aimed at the development of space technologies, which spearhead the promotion and the development of the social policies of our national Government.

In sum, Venezuela maintains that a real commitment that seeks to prevent an arms race in outer space is inextricably linked to a strengthening of international cooperation, with a view to establishing an international regime based on a binding instrument that guarantees egalitarian respect for their provisions by all countries and which ensures an equitable and well balanced access to the scientific and technological benefits, derived from the peaceful use of outer space. There is no doubt that the United Nations and the Commission on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space have a fundamental role to play in the achievement of these objectives.

Mr. Vasiliev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Firstly, I would like to stress, once again, that we would feel it useful to hold a discussion on each thematic cluster. By mixing two clusters into one discussion period, it makes it hard for us to focus on a discussion of one theme.

The prevention of the arms race in outer space is a priority for the Russian Federation. It is a major and urgent problem. This year, we were again among the sponsors of a draft resolution on preventing the arms race in outer space. The timeliness of this draft is not only not shrinking, but is, in fact, growing.

This year, at the Conference on Disarmament, there was an interesting, detailed and successful debate on the question on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. This showed that all States are interested in outer space not being turned into a battlefield, that security in space be ensured and that there will also be proper functioning of space objects. This allows us to feel that we can achieve consensus on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

This is a most important question directly effecting the interests of security and development of all States. If we look at this objectively and in an unbiased way, then of all of the items of the agenda for the Conference on Disarmament, the question of the prevention of an arms race in outer space met with the greatest unanimity among delegations. On the other hand, however, the number of delegations that still had

doubts about the importance of immediately resuming work on the prevention of an arms race in outer space was the smallest that we have ever had.

I say this without detriment to the discussion of other issues discussed at the Conference on Disarmament. Since this year as well, the discussions again confirmed that the resumption of substantive work on the Conference on Disarmament is only possible with balanced agreement on its programme of work. During the debate interesting, weighty and profound comments and proposals were made relating to the proposal of the Russian Federation and China to develop a treaty on the prevention of the emplacement of weapons in outer space and the use of force or the threat of the use of force against space objects and on measures for transparency in confidence building and space activities, including in the context of this treaty.

The idea of a new treaty has been discussed for more than four years in the Conference on Disarmament. During the various activities of the thematic meetings on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, representatives of more than 20 delegations and regional groups spoke and nine working papers were presented. With the help of experts from seven participating States, we were able to plan the work of the special committee of the Conference on Disarmament on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, where both the substantive and political aspects will be taken into account. After more than 20 years of consideration of this topic in the Conference on Disarmament, we have made tangible progress in resolving and developing solutions to problems in that area.

More importantly, the Conference concluded that it should, as soon as possible, resume its substantive work on the question of the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We are at a stage when it is counter-productive to wait until the issue is mature. Frankly, when this question matures, it will already be too late We must do everything to ensure that this question never becomes mature.

Many delegations at the Conference on Disarmament agreed with the idea of concentrating future work of the Conference with regard to the question of the prevention of an arms race in outer space or an existing practical proposal, namely, to develop a new treaty on the prevention of deployment of weapons in outer space and on the threat or the use of force against space objects are the main elements contained in document CD/1679. In that connection and given the results of the debate we had in the Conference on Disarmament, we would like to clarify once again for all Member States of the United Nations, the thrust of the new treaty that is being proposed in CD/1679. Firstly, I would like to say that we are not proposing a treaty to prevent an arms race in outer space. Our idea is not a treaty on preventing an arms race in outer space. To call our initiative that would not be correct. It would be closer to the truth to call the new treaty on the non-weaponization of outer space or a treaty on the non-stationing of weapons in outer space, although that would not be its final name.

The aim here is simple. We are trying to resolve the problem differently. If we prohibit weapons in outer space and all States observe that prohibition, then there is no arms race in outer space. An arms race is not possible in a sphere where there is a general prohibition on weapons. In other words, in solving the question of the non-weaponization of space, we erect a barrier against an arms race in outer space. However, that is not sufficient. We also believe that interfering in the regular functioning of space objects could be done without the use of space weapons, it could be done using weapons based elsewhere or other actions not involving weapons. In order to protect space objects from such threats and prevent any other actions involving the use of force in space, we propose to augment the prohibition of the weaponization of outer space by adding one more obligation, namely, the non-use of force or the threat of force against space objects. It would therefore be more correct to call our proposal a new treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the use of force or threat of use of force against space objects.

In document CD/1679 there are three main obligations that form the specific scope of the proposed treaty. The first is not to launch any object with any kind of weapon into Earth orbit, place such a weapon on a celestial body or place them in space in any other manner. Secondly, not to resort to the use of force, or the threat of the use of force against space objects. Thirdly, not to cooperate with or incite other States, groups of States or international organizations to participate in activities that are prohibited under the treaty. Those key elements represent a step forward in international law in ensuring the peaceful status of

outer space and ensuring free access to space, security in space and the normal functioning of space objects.

During the discussions in the Conference on Disarmament, we considered in detail the possible concrete contents of each of the obligations. During the discussion, on the main elements proposed for the new treaty we also discussed the main terms and their definitions. Various versions emerged in that area. Regardless of which versions will ultimately be chosen by all of the interested countries, we made and discussed various concrete proposals on the definition of certain key terms of the future treaty, as contained in document CD/1679. Those terms include "outer space", "space object", "weapon in space" and others.

We wanted very briefly to present the scope of the new treaty and some of its other elements, so we could illustrate the nature of the discussions that took place in the Conference on Disarmament. The discussions were professional and substantive and were aimed at achieving practical results. Of course, there are still specific questions that need further work and delegations have retained those issues for further review at home. It is important that the framework for future detailed work has been clarified. It is also important that the discussions showed the realism and practical feasibility of the provisions of the new treaty. It is not aimed at prohibiting or limiting anything that States now have in space. It is strictly preventive in nature — as we say concerning an illness, prevention is easier than a cure.

We are certain the proposed measures in the new treaty are in the interest of all States, without exception, and we are ready to continue to convince others of that. In any case, any decisions or agreements should be reached based upon consensus and, to that end, Russia will continue its active efforts.

It is now time to move from general words to concrete issues and concrete treatises. I recall that all of the documents and materials in the discussions this year in the Conference on Disarmament on the topic of the prevention of an arms race in outer space are available on the Internet. We invite all States and interested organizations to continue to cooperate closely. We also call upon delegations to prepare seriously and in time for continuing the work in the Conference on Disarmament in 2007 on the topic proposed in document CD/1679, namely, the treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the threat or use of force against space objects.

I will conclude by reiterating that the placement of weapons in outer space could bring great evil to all. We must not allow that and we can do that.

Mr. Adji (Indonesia): I will limit my intervention to biological and chemical weapons. First of all, I would like to thank Ambassador Khan of Pakistan, the President-designate of the Sixth Review Conference of the Parties to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) for his informative and comprehensive presentation. I am confident that he will guide the forthcoming Review Conference to a positive outcome.

With regard to biological weapons, Indonesia calls upon States parties to the BTWC to restart negotiations on the protocol of the Convention. In 2001, we unfortunately witnessed the failure of the negotiations on the protocol that would have provided States parties with compliance measures and verification mechanisms. We now need to double our efforts to ensure that the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention remains a vital and effective element of the international response to the threat of biological weapons.

In the absence of a protocol, Indonesia and Australia have co-hosted a regional workshop, whose objective was to highlight the importance as well as facilitate a greater understanding of the need by the States parties in the region to implement the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, so that our common objectives could be fulfilled. The workshop was also organized to encourage countries in the region to recognize the security benefits derived from the full and effective implementation of the Convention.

We believe that it remains the responsibility of States to take effective measures to prevent the misuse of dual-use biological agents. In that regard, the Indonesian working group on the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, which consists of various governmental institutions, has started the drafting process for a national programme of action to implement the Convention.

I would now like to turn to the topic of chemical weapons. The so-called three pillars of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) — namely, the destruction of chemical weapons, non-proliferation and

international cooperation should be implemented in a balanced manner and respected by all States parties.

All existing stockpiles of chemical weapons must be destroyed without delay. That is the first pillar of the CWC. We commend the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) for providing the necessary technical assistance for this purpose. Indonesia is seriously concerned over the slow pace of chemical weapons destruction by some possessor States and urges those States to confirm with the scheduled deadline of the destruction, as stated in the CWC.

As to the second pillar — that is, curbing the proliferation of hazardous chemical substances — intergovernmental cooperation is essential, so that transboundary movements of these substances can be strictly controlled. Care must be taken, however, so that the peaceful application of dual-use substances, especially for development purposes, is not hampered.

These two pillars of the CWC cannot be effective if we do not, at the same time, promote the third pillar, which is international cooperation and assistance. This is a very important incentive for those countries that have never built chemical weapons to join the Chemical Weapons Convention. While hoping the peaceful application of chemicals will not be restricted, many States parties are still in need of assistance in meeting their CWC obligations. This assistance must be provided. We also need to plan and carry out confidence-building measures, so that States parties can work together more closely.

Indonesia has been able to enhance its national capacity to adhere to the Convention. We have strengthened coordination among our stakeholders at the national level. This has been possible, because we are working in very close collaboration with the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW.

As part of Indonesia's contributions to achieving effective progress towards general and complete prohibition of chemical weapons and to promote cooperation in the field of chemistry for peaceful purposes, Indonesia, in conjunction with the OPCW, organized the Fourth Regional Meeting of National Authorities of States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention in Asia, which took place in Jakarta last month. The meeting provided a forum for States parties to the CWC to present their needs for assistance and indicate what assistance they could offer to other States parties. The meeting gave concrete input to the OPCW Technical Secretariat on how it could enhance its assistance to States parties in the region, pursuant to the Conference of States parties decision relating to the implementation of article VII of the CWC.

Ms. Fernando (Sri Lanka): Let me begin by adding my voice to those of other delegations who have spoken of the need for a clearer separation in the debate between the other weapons of mass destruction cluster and the outer space disarmament cluster. I hope that you will be able to convey our views to the next Chairperson of the First Committee.

On the first cluster, we would like to thank Ambassador Khan for his comprehensive presentation on preparations for the Review Conference on the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC), and we will, of course, give him our fullest support for the successful conclusion of the forthcoming Review Conference.

On the second cluster, we wish to state that Sri Lanka has had a long-abiding interest in the issues of outer space, grounded in our early involvement in the negotiations in the United Nations on pioneering undertakings of international law, which have included the law of the sea and outer space and have led to the defining of the concept of the common heritage of humankind and the formulation of the imperative of keeping space a peaceful arena for all time.

Several treaties and agreements have been concluded over the years to protect space assets, of which the 1967 Outer Space Treaty remains the most important. At the time of the conclusion of that Treaty in the early years of space exploration, only a very few nations had the ability to have their own space programmes. The situation today is quite different, with more than 130 countries possessing some space programmes and over 30 with launch capabilities.

Space technologies are particularly important for developing countries, as they impact on critical areas, such as communications, education, health and the environment, food security and disaster management, among others. Everyone has a stake in space security today.

As the fortieth anniversary of the Outer Space Treaty approaches in 2007, we would urge Member States to work towards its universalization and hope

the Department for Disarmament Affairs will also lend its support, as possible, in this regard.

We all have a stake in examining together present and future threats and to keep outer space peaceful for all humankind. We were pleased, therefore, that there was a positive atmosphere and constructive momentum this year in the Conference on Disarmament, which included taking forward the discussions on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Every year, the First Committee adopts, by overwhelming vote, a resolution on the topic, which, recalling Dag Hammarskjöld's wise counsel on the value of such hardy perennials, we believe establishes important principles and universal values, and will eventually have the weight of customary law.

Mr. Prasad (India): My delegation is grateful to Ambassador Masood Khan of Pakistan for his comprehensive presentation this afternoon, and for his painstaking preparations for the forthcoming Review Conference of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC). We look forward to a positive outcome of this Conference and, at the very minimum, hope to have agreement on a forward-looking future intersessional work programme.

I shall confine my very brief remarks for now to the disarmament aspects of outer space. As several delegations, including those of Canada, China, the Russian Federation, Sri Lanka and the United States have just pointed out, there has been a dramatic acceleration in recent years in the peaceful uses of outer space and in international cooperation for this purpose. So also has there been increased potential, in particular for developing countries, to leapfrog and become full participants in the technology-based global economy of the twenty-first century.

India, for instance, has in the past year signed agreements with the Russian Federation and the European Union (EU) for cooperation in their Glonas and Galileo programmes, respectively, and the Indian Space Research Organization mission to the moon in 2008 will carry lunar surface mapping instruments from Bulgaria, the European Space Agency and NASA. A connectivity mission between India and the countries of the African Union (AU) is being pursued to provide both communication links and a range of space-enabled development-oriented services.

Given the increasing use of outer space for development purposes and the all-pervasive application of space technology to almost every aspect of modern life, we cannot overlook the importance of the security of assets based in outer space and the enormously harmful consequences of any possible threat to them. We, therefore, strongly support the quest to upgrade the present international legal framework for regulating space activities, established at the relative infancy of the development of space technology, and to buttress and strengthen existing space law for the peaceful use and exploration of outer space.

Respect for the safety and security of space assets and capabilities of all countries is a prerequisite for ensuring the continued flow of space-enabled services for all countries, including to developing countries.

The issue of outer space has been on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament since 1982, and an Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space functioned there for a decade, starting in 1985. That Committee was engaged in examining, as a first step at that stage, issues relevant to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. These issues remain as relevant today as they were two decades ago, if not more so. Earlier this year, we had useful discussions on that subject in the plenary of the Conference. India supports the re-establishment of an ad hoc committee of the Conference on Disarmament to deal with the issue of the prevention of an arms race in outer space and stands ready to contribute to its consideration in a constructive manner.

Mr. Kolesnik (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): During the general debate, our delegation set out its approach to the questions of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and other types of weapons of mass destruction. Allow me to set out briefly our position on one of today's burning issues: the prevention of an arm's race in outer space. The Republic of Belarus supports the efforts of countries aimed at preserving the peaceful character of outer space. Discussions in the Conference on Disarmament allows us to remain somewhat optimistic. The international community understands the threat of weaponization of outer space. That is not hypothetical; it is real.

We need space for the stable development of future generations. If we manage to create and strengthen a legal foundation for the peaceful use of outer space, then it will serve decades of future generations. If we lose time, then it will take us decades to correct that situation. In this connection, we

support the continuation of the work within the Conference on Disarmament on the problems of the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We support the conclusions of the relevant international agreements, together with the development of confidence-building measures and measures for security, particularly as regards the use of outer space.

Mr. Oshima (Japan): I do not have a prepared statement, so my words might not be as beautiful as others, but I would like to make a few remarks on the Biological Weapons Convention and on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. First of all, on the Biological Weapon Convention, I would like thank Ambassador Khan for the very extensive and comprehensive explanation he gave. As many people have already pointed out, we think the upcoming Review Conference is a very important opportunity. We have not had good review for the past ten years. We had a conference, which was interrupted five years ago, and as a result we were unable to have a good review. This is the first comprehensive review in ten years, and we have many items to address. In addition to that, we have an intersessional process, in which we have identified many questions that have not always been included in the articles. We must pay attention to both approaches; that is, the article-by-article approach and the crosscutting issues approach, which involves items that were taken up during the intersessional processes. What is important is that we will have many items to deal with in the coming Review Conference, and we must make a maximum effort to lead the Conference to success under the able guidance of Ambassador Khan. Frankly, there are several items that can be very difficult, but I think we are in a good enough position to proceed and lead the Conference to a success.

Now on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, our discussion was very interesting and, the more I hear, the more interesting it becomes. It is very true that under the presidency of the Russian Federation in the Conference on Disarmament we had very extensive and good discussions on the issue. Today, I also heard some new elements, for instance from the distinguished representative of Venezuela about how their country sees the problem and the domestic developments in that country, which are very new to me because Venezuela has never spoken out on that in the Conference on Disarmament. Coming back to the Conference on Disarmament, under the presidency of the Russian Federation we had good discussions and we have identified various types of issues; one deals with safe operation in outer space, including space debris and the jamming of satellite operations. There are many related items, which we have not addressed. As our colleague from Canada pointed out, these questions must be addressed first in the appropriate specialized agency or forum, like the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space or the International Telecommunication Union. They are the venues where we should study these technical matters first. There are also other concepts that have been mentioned but are, unfortunately, still not quite clear to some countries, including Japan. One example is the weaponization of outer space and the arms race in outer space. These are not entirely clear to us, but they may be very important concepts. I think, therefore, that we have to continue to discuss and try to define what they mean. Right now, for some countries like Japan, they are not yet well defined. I completely agree with countries that have pointed out that it is important to continue to discuss all the related items, with due concern for what is the best framework for addressing these problems.

The President: We will continue our discussion tomorrow. We will then proceed to the introduction of draft resolutions. Tomorrow and on Friday the Committee will proceed with its thematic discussion on the subject of conventional weapons. Tomorrow, we will also have two guest speakers, the President of the United Nations Review Conference on Small Arms and Light Weapons and the Chairman of the Group of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. I give the floor to France to speak on Other Matters.

Ms. Fernando (Sri Lanka): I wanted to thank the Secretary of the Committee for having responded to my request yesterday and for informing us which draft resolutions would be introduced. We thought it would be today, but it will be tomorrow.

However, Madam Chairperson, I wonder if, when you make the announcement, you could provide this information to the Committee as a whole. That would probably be quite useful for all representatives.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.

United Nations A/C.1/61/PV.11*

General Assembly
Sixty-first session

Official Records

First Committee
11th meeting
Wednesday, 11 October 2006, 3 p.m.
New York

Chairperson: Mrs. Juul ..... (Norway)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda items 82 to 97 (*continued*)

Thematic discussion on item subjects and introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chairperson: I would like to remind all delegations that the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions is 6 p.m. today. I would also like to stress again that delegations should ensure that the content of their submissions is accurate so that documents can be processed in a timely and efficient manner. In the event that delegations need to make minor changes or technical corrections to draft resolutions, I would kindly urge them to revise them orally, if possible, rather than requesting the Secretariat to issue a revised document. That would certainly help to maximize the efficiency of the Committee's work, while saving costs for the Organization.

Let us now begin our thematic discussion on the subjects of other weapons of mass destruction and the disarmament aspects of outer space.

Today, we have a guest speaker: the President-designate of the Sixth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention, Ambassador Masood Khan. I now invite Ambassador Khan to make a statement.

Mr. Khan (Biological Weapons Convention Review Conference): Thank you, Madam Chairperson, for giving me the opportunity to address the Committee and to hear its views on the pressing issue of biological weapons. I would also like to thank Mr. Nabuaki Tanaka, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for his support and comments. Last week, he said that, in confronting the dangers posed by weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), "practical, positive steps are within our reach". Let us take such steps with regard to biological weapons.

This thematic discussion in the First Committee is well timed. The Sixth Review Conference is around the corner, only a few short weeks away. Here in New York, we can take stock of the situation and consider the challenges and possibilities that lie before us. My remarks today will refer to the *PowerPoint* presentation that will be displayed in the conference room.

Let me start with two quotations. The first is from Secretary-General Kofi Annan who, on 5 December 2005, said that the Biological Weapons Convention was as relevant then as it was 30 years before, and that

> "Developments in the life sciences in the years ahead will no doubt bring remarkable benefits, but they may also carry with them, as an almost inevitable corollary, considerable dangers. There has never been more urgent need for international commitment to the universal application [of] and full compliance with the Convention".

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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The second quotation is from Mr. Hans Blix, who stated in the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission Report of 1 June 2006 that

> "Nuclear, biological and chemical arms are the most inhumane of all weapons. Designed to terrify as well as destroy, they can, in the hands of either States or non-State actors, cause destruction on a vastly greater scale than any conventional weapons, and their impact is far more indiscriminate and long-lasting".

What is it that we can do at the Sixth Review Conference? It is an opportunity to reaffirm the ban on biological and toxin weapons. It is a chance to address the threat posed by the possible use of such weapons by terrorists. It is a matter of tremendous importance for global health and international peace and security. It also gives us an opportunity to explore cooperation and exchanges for responsible use of the biosciences for human development.

The Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) has had marked success in defining a clear and unambiguous global norm completely prohibiting the acquisition and use of biological and toxin weapons under any circumstances. The preamble to the Convention forcefully states that the use of disease as a weapon would be "repugnant to the conscience of mankind". The Convention captures the solemn undertaking of the States parties "never in any circumstance to develop, produce, stockpile or otherwise acquire or retain" such weapons. With 155 States parties, the treaty is not universal, but no country dares argue that biological weapons can ever have a legitimate role in national defence. Such is the force of the treaty.

The BWC is a landmark treaty. States parties have made dual commitments under the treaty, to destroy biological weapons and not to arm or re-arm. Successive Review Conferences have strengthened the Convention. We need to do more to make it more relevant and effective. The key lies in its faithful implementation.

The BWC is part of a network. It is a fundamental pillar, along with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) of the global regime against weapons of mass destruction. It is also part of a network of measures that deal directly and indirectly with the prevention of and response to biological weapons. Other parts of this network include the World Health Organization (WHO), the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), Interpol, UNESCO, Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), the international scientific organizations and the various United Nations agencies involved with emergency response.

Coordination is becoming ever more important. The Secretary-General in his recent report entitled "Uniting against terrorism: recommendations for a global terrorism strategy" (A/60/825), suggests the creation of a forum to coordinate these activities. The Review Conference will be, in effect, just such a forum, and we should use it as such.

We are all familiar with the history of the Convention, particularly that of the recent past. The Convention experienced disappointments, due largely to a difference of opinion on how to strengthen and improve its effectiveness. Changes in the international security environment since 2001, especially the focus on the threat of bioterrorism, have added urgency to our task. The Review Conference should build on the success of the Convention, find ways to overcome problems and convert divergences into convergences.

Our common objectives should be to strengthen the barriers against biological weapons, reduce the risk of bioterrorism and ensure that the vitally important peaceful applications of biological science and technology are safely and securely developed to their full potential for the benefit of people around the world.

We have already made a good start. We have a provisional agenda in our hands, thanks to the maturity and wisdom demonstrated by States parties. It is an agenda that is flexible enough to ensure a thorough review of all aspects of the Convention. At the Preparatory Committee in April, we met all the objectives we had set for ourselves and settled all the necessary procedural machinery. We are not sitting on our laurels. It is time to move to substance. Some States parties have already been working hard. A number of papers have been developed and circulated for discussion, and I understand that more are on their way.

I have had the opportunity to discuss ideas and proposals with individual delegations and with groups. It is too early to give a definitive account of what will

be on the table at the Review Conference. But let me give members a sense of what I have heard delegations express interest in so far. The field is still wide open.

Let me start this part of my presentation with an excerpt from the Hippocratic Oath:

> "I will apply dietetic measures for the benefit of the sick according to my ability and judgement; I will keep them from harm and injustice.
>
> "I will neither give a deadly drug to anybody if asked for it, nor will I make a suggestion to this effect".

Biological weapons are not science fiction. The use of disease as a weapon is a real and potent threat. Bioweapons have struck or stalked us since ancient times. Designed for military use or terrorist attacks, biological weapons kill or injure human beings, animals and plants. In their impact, they are as deadly as nuclear weapons, or even deadlier. They hit and disable combatants and civilians alike. They do not distinguish between friend and foe. Their vicious fury strikes massively and indiscriminately and the death caused by them is gruesome.

Let me recapitulate some of the key articles of the Convention. The preamble, as I said earlier, says that the use of biological agents and toxin weapons is repugnant to the conscience of mankind. States parties to the Convention agree or undertake: under article I, never under any circumstances to acquire or retain biological weapons; under article II, to destroy or divert to peaceful purposes biological weapons and associated resources prior to joining the Convention; under article III, not to transfer, or in any way assist, encourage or induce anyone else to acquire or retain biological weapons; under article IV, to take any national measures necessary to implement the provisions of the BWC domestically; under article V, to consult bilaterally and multilaterally to solve any problems with the implementation of the BWC; under article VI, to request the Security Council to investigate alleged breaches of the BWC and to comply with its subsequent decisions; under article VII, to assist States which have been exposed to a danger as a result of a violation of the BWC; and under article X, to do all of the aforementioned in a way that encourages the peaceful uses of biological science and technology.

Biological warfare and bioterrorism involve the deliberate cause or spread of disease by biological agents used as a weapon. Such weapons have the potential to cause immense human harm. My *PowerPoint* slide lists some of the agents here, and also incidents going back to ancient times: the sixth century, the fourteenth century, the fifteenth century, the First World War, and then we have a landmark, when the Geneva Protocol was adopted in 1925. The slides show instances of its use and research on it from the 1930s well into the 1960s. In 1972, the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention was signed, and it has now been ratified by 155 States. Recent incidents include: salmonella, sarin in 1995, anthrax in 2001 and 2002, avian influenza in recent years, the scare of a ricin conspiracy in 2003 and one instance in the Pankisi Gorge in Georgia in 2002. Here, results were different from initial claims.

What is the Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission's advice for the Sixth Review Conference? It says, first, that it should reaffirm common understandings reached at previous Review Conferences and take action on all subjects addressed at Convention meetings since 2003. Secondly, States should ensure the more frequent reassessment of the implications of scientific and technological developments, reaffirm that all undertakings under article I of the BWC apply to such developments and reaffirm that all developments in the life sciences both fall within the scope of the BWC and that all such development for hostile purposes are prohibited by the Convention.

We have four challenges to meet: universal adherence to the Convention; the threat of terrorists or non-State actors gaining access to biological weapons; the immense potential of the life sciences to be tapped in the right manner; and the need to strengthen compliance with the Convention.

Regarding adherence to the BWC, let me tell the First Committee that we need to universalize the Convention, which at the moment has 155 States parties and 16 signatories. There are 23 States which have neither signed nor ratified. We should work towards universal compliance before 2011. The Sixth Review Conference should be a starting point for that effort. The European Union has already committed resources for this undertaking.

In his report "Uniting against terrorism" Secretary-General Kofi Annan has given us a strategy of five Ds: dissuasion, denial, deterrence, development and defence. He has also suggested the establishment of a forum that would bring together all the key stakeholders.

Regarding new scientific developments, life scientists have to become more aware of how their work can impinge on the BWC's legal and ethical norms against bioweapons. New vaccines, intended for instance to cure Alzheimer's disease, can be used for harmful purposes. Scientists are increasingly getting used to the idea of inviting enhanced scrutiny and peer observation. But that responsibility does not stop at the door of scientists. Governments and relevant agencies should always be in a position to monitor scientific advances that may lead to the production of bioweapons that are resistant to known medicines and to develop effective measures against them.

Codes of conduct are difficult to formulate. Many life sciences deal with dual-use materials and technologies. Scientists and administrators should be involved in the development, adoption and review of codes of conduct. These codes should be simple, clear and broad in scope and compatible with national legislation and regulatory controls, and they should contribute to national implementation measures.

Regarding the intersessional process, the meetings that took place between 2003 and 2005 addressed the following subjects: national implementation, security and oversight of pathogens, capabilities for responding to and investigating alleged uses of biological weapons, mechanisms for disease surveillance and response and codes of conduct for scientists.

Some lessons learned were that discussions that are not expected to lead to binding commitments are more collegial, cooperative and constructive; States parties and all other actors learn more. They raise awareness; they are less polemical; and they keep the focus on the BWC and make it responsive to contemporary developments. Side discussions serve as building blocks that States parties can use for possible agreements when they are ready to do so; they also work as catalysts for agreements. There is a growing sense among States that the Sixth Review Conference should decide on an intersessional calendar from 2007 to 2010.

An object lesson is that we have to be aware of the dangers posed by lone disaffected scientists or lurking bioterrorists.

Compliance hinges on intent. Strong national legislation and administrative measures are critical to coordinated and coherent implementation of the Convention. Precautions should be taken to ensure that research in biodefence programmes has a defensive orientation, is amenable to scientific oversight and conforms to the BWC.

It is too early to give a definitive account of what will be on the table at the Review Conference. In any case, it is not my role to dictate the menu; I am a servant of the process. But here are some of the suggestions that I would like to make: we should have a concise document, which should be easily understandable; we need to record our understandings and commitments in a way that communicates them, not only to the States parties, but also to the media, the scientific community, industry and the general public. That is important to ensure that the struggle against biological weapons is a shared effort across Governments, commerce and civil society. It is also important for the promotion and development of the peaceful applications of biological sciences and technology.

It is important for us to recapture and reaffirm, very briefly, core elements of the Convention and previous understandings reached by States parties. Because of the phenomenal advances in the life sciences, it will be both prudent and desirable to state that the Convention applies to all relevant scientific and technological developments. It would also be useful to recall the understanding that the Convention implicitly prohibits the use of biological weapons.

The Chairperson: I am obliged to interrupt the speaker. There is a great deal of noise in the room. I would request members to respect our speaker and try to be quieter. Members should take their places, or should leave the room if consultations are necessary.

Mr. Khan (Biological Weapons Convention Review Conference): I am glad that my presentation has stimulated several parallel discussions; there are lots of bilateral discussions going on.

With regard to article X, our security measures should not impede, but should enable and support, the peaceful application of biological science and

technology for human development through cooperation and exchanges. We must review what was done in the recent past; I have talked about that.

We also have some elements relating to what could go into the outcome document. Common themes are already emerging. I have heard delegations express interest in proposals relating to the following areas: an intersessional calendar of meetings and activities on agreed topics for the period 2007-2010; confidence-building measures; the universalization of the Convention; new scientific and technological developments; scientific and technological cooperation and exchanges; bioterrorism; compliance and verification; coordination with other organizations; and implementation support arrangements for the Convention, inter alia, to run a new intersessional process.

That list is indicative. The States parties are the ultimate arbiters of the substance and content of the outcome document. The subjects to which I referred could be used to develop the document.

We will take a two-pronged approach. We will undertake an article-by-article review of the Convention, and many issues which fall naturally under one or other of the articles of the Convention can be dealt with in that review. We will also have an opportunity for a more thematic consideration to deal with those issues that by their very nature cut across several articles of the Convention. We retain the flexibility to manage our work as the Conference proceeds.

We have a very competent Bureau. The Committee of the Whole, under the capable chairmanship of Ambassador Doru Costea of Romania, will devote itself to the article-by-article review. As the Committee of the Whole proceeds with this work, I would propose the convening of informal working groups, as needed, to address any issues that appear to be more suited to a thematic approach.

Once the various proposals have been sufficiently developed and refined through those two complementary avenues, I suggest that we convene the Drafting Committee, under the equally capable chairmanship of Mr. Knut Langeland of Norway, to draw the threads together and produce a concise, coherent and cohesive outcome document. We will have not a sequential, but a simultaneous, approach. We are lucky to have Mr. Tim Caughley as the Secretary General. Mr. Richard Lennane, the Secretary, is helping out with the entire process, and he is being assisted by Mr. Piers Millet.

What we need is synergy, not a trade-off. What can States parties do? They should prepare concise proposals and share them with others. They should meet within their own groups and with other principal interlocutors. They should prepare their ministries to help out with universal adherence and implementation. They should sensitize top decision-makers to the importance of the BWC. They should continue dialogue with industry, international organizations, academia, the media and non-governmental organizations. They should touch base with other capitals before going to Geneva. It is our collective responsibility to develop good interpersonal chemistry among negotiators. We should ensure good conference management. Above all, I would say, "Be in a good mood when you go to Geneva, and go to Geneva to succeed".

I have spelled out what the median point could be — I will not belabour the point, because I have already touched on most of these issues. Finally, I would like to say that there is no silver bullet. There is a lot of heavy lifting involved, and we will have to do it collectively.

I would like to ask members of the First Committee — those who are listening to me — to give their views to me. Ask questions; make observations; give guidance. The Chairperson, her gavel and the red light will determine how much time you have to do all of this.

The Chairperson: It is now my intention to suspend the meeting in order to provide the Committee with the opportunity to have an interactive discussion with our guest speaker in the form of an informal question and answer session.

The meeting was suspended at 3.35 p.m. and resumed at 3.45 p.m.

The Chairperson: I will now give the floor to delegations wishing to make statements on today's thematic subject. I would invite delegations to first make statements on the subject of other weapons of mass destruction. After we have concluded that subject, we will move to the subject of outer space. Delegations are also welcome to combine the two subjects.

Mr. Kahilvoto (Finland): I am speaking on behalf of the European Union (EU). The acceding countries Bulgaria and Romania; the candidate countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia; and the European Free Trade Association countries Norway and Liechtenstein, members of the European Economic Area; as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this declaration.

The European Union is guided by its commitment to uphold, implement and strengthen the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation treaties and agreements. Meeting the challenge of proliferation risks constitutes a key element in the European Union's external relations.

The European Union strategy against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction commits the Union to act with resolve, using all instruments and policies at its disposal to prevent, deter, halt and, where possible, eliminate proliferation programmes of concern worldwide.

The Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) have an essential role in countering the threat of chemical and biological weapons. Together with other key multilateral agreements, they provide a basis for the international community's disarmament and non-proliferation efforts, which contribute to international confidence, stability and peace, including the fight against terrorism. We urge States that are not parties to those treaties to adhere to them and join the mainstream, and we also urge all States to meet their obligations under Security Council resolutions 1540 (2004) and 1673 (2006). We continue to urge all those States that are parties to the treaties to take all necessary steps to implement their obligations under those treaties and the two resolutions mentioned earlier, including in relation to enacting penal legislation. The EU stands ready to assist to that end when requested to do so.

The Union believes that control of emerging technology will continue to be an issue of considerable concern in the area of chemical and biological weapons. The potential for the illicit use of such technologies has been specifically mentioned in scientific literature and highlights the need to monitor technological developments in respect of emerging processes and related equipment with potential use in chemical and biological weapons programmes. We intend to be active in that area.

Cooperation with other countries to reduce and eliminate weapons of mass destruction within the framework of the Global Partnership initiative is a part of the European Union strategy and its Common Position on the NPT. The EU underlines the relevance of the G-8 Partnership initiatives to weapons of mass destruction-related disarmament and non-proliferation efforts.

The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention is particularly topical at this time, as the Sixth Review Conference of the Convention will be taking place soon, in November and December. The EU considers the Convention a key component of the international disarmament and non-proliferation framework and the cornerstone of efforts to prevent biological agents and toxins from ever being developed and used as weapons. Our efforts are aimed at strengthening this Convention further, and we remain committed to the development of measures to verify compliance with the Convention in the longer term.

The EU will promote a successful outcome of the BTWC Review Conference by contributing to a full review of the operation of the Convention, including the implementation of the undertakings of the States parties under the Convention. The EU is ready to do its part in building consensus for a substantive outcome, on the basis of the framework established by previous Review Conferences.

We will promote, inter alia, the following essential issues: universal adherence of all States to the Convention; full compliance with obligations under the Convention and their effective implementation by all States Parties; national implementation measures and control over pathogenic micro-organisms and toxins in the framework of the Convention; working towards devising effective mechanisms to strengthen and verify compliance with the BTWC; efforts to enhance transparency through the increased exchange of information among States parties, including through annual information exchanges among them; compliance with the obligations undertaken under Security Council resolutions 1540 (2004) and 1673 (2006), in particular to eliminate the risk of biological

or toxin weapons being acquired or used for terrorist purposes; the G-8 Global Partnership programmes; and decisions on further action on the work undertaken to date during the previous intersessional programme.

The Union will support a further intersessional work programme before the next Review Conference, which should be held no later than 2011. We will contribute to identifying specific areas and procedures for further progress under that work programme. We have submitted working papers in which our views and suggestions are elaborated on in detail.

The Union is fully prepared to play a constructive role in ensuring that our joint efforts lead to meaningful and practical results at the Conference. We support the efforts of the President-designate of the Conference to that effect.

While preparing for the Review Conference, the EU is taking practical measures to promote the universalization and effective national implementation of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, including regional workshops and assistance on relevant legal and technical aspects. That is being done through our Joint Action, giving implementation to some elements of our weapons of mass destruction strategy. In parallel with our Joint Action, we have also adopted an Action Plan in which the EU member States undertook to submit confidence-building measures returns to the United Nations each year, as well as to consider and volunteer expertise to the Secretary-General in helping him update the lists of experts and laboratories on which he may call for investigation of the alleged use of chemical or biological weapons.

We welcome the fact that the resolution on the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy adopted by the General Assembly on 6 September last encouraged the Secretary-General to update the roster of experts and laboratories as well as the technical guidelines and procedures available to him. More generally, regarding the exchange of information, including confidence-building measures, we also welcome the new BTWC Internet site, set up by the Department for Disarmament Affairs, as a valuable tool.

The EU acknowledges the progress made towards the universalization of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), a unique disarmament and non-proliferation instrument. We fully support the organization that is ensuring the implementation of the CWC and compliance with its demands, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Our support for the OPCW extends to very practical cooperation, thus giving immediate and practical implementation to some elements of the EU strategy against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. That practical support is focused on the promotion of the universality of the CWC, support for implementation of the CWC by the States parties, and international cooperation in the field of chemical activities.

The EU believes that the CWC must be strictly applied. One of the most important features of the CWC is the obligation for possessors of chemical weapons to destroy their stockpiles by specified deadlines. We continue to urge such possessors to take every possible step to meet those deadlines. In supporting that aim, the EU — and, bilaterally, several of its member States — has provided assistance to Russia. The EU underlines also the necessity for all States parties to implement in their own legislation the Convention's provisions, as per article VII.

We would recall that States acceding to or ratifying and implementing the CWC can be provided assistance by the OPCW to comply fully with the provisions of the Convention. We would like also to reiterate here our offer of assistance as communicated to all States parties by the Director-General of the OPCW.

The EU believes that the verification regime implemented by the OPCW is an essential means of deterring non-compliance with the Convention and of increasing transparency, confidence and international security. Within that regime, challenge inspections remain a valid tool, and the EU believes that the Technical Secretariat must be well prepared and equipped to conduct such inspections. Furthermore, the EU supports the efforts being made to maintain its readiness.

Turning to the issue of ballistic missiles, in addressing the issue of ballistic missiles capable of delivering weapons of mass destruction, the European Union supports the Hague Code of Conduct, which, since its inception in November 2002, has become an important instrument for the promotion of transparency and confidence-building and a practical contribution against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. In particular, we continue to underline the

fact that the Code constitutes the most concrete initiative in the fight against the proliferation of ballistic missiles and a fundamental step towards effectively addressing the problem of missile proliferation from a multilateral global perspective.

We are pleased that 124 countries have already subscribed to the Code and that additional countries are seriously considering taking that step soon. However, the strength of the Code depends on the full implementation of the transparency measures foreseen by all subscribing States. The EU therefore urges all subscribing States to fully implement the Code's transparency measures.

Here, I would like to take the opportunity to briefly address the question of outer space activities. The EU is aware of the growing involvement of the international community in outer space activities aimed at development and progress and of the increasing dependence on outer space for economic and industrial development, as well as for security. We are actively cooperating in various space initiatives. Such activities should be developed in a peaceful environment. An arms race in outer space must be prevented. Such prevention is an essential condition for the strengthening of strategic stability and the promotion of international cooperation aimed at the free exploration and use of outer space by all States for peaceful purposes.

We recognize a growing convergence of views on the elaboration of measures to strengthen transparency, confidence and security in the peaceful uses of outer space. We also appreciated the careful consideration of the issue of preventing an arms race in outer space this year by the Conference on Disarmament. We consider that to be an important matter to be dealt with in the Conference, in a way that is subject to agreement by all.

To conclude, I would like to refer to the value of international public discussion that contributes over the long term to the creation, universalization and effective implementation of international commitments relating to weapons of mass destruction. Among other things, such discussion has contributed strongly to the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWTC), which in effect represent the universal perception of the total unacceptability of biological and chemical weapons. The everyday relevance of that contribution has been well illustrated — for example, in the discussion on the codes of conduct for scientists in the context of the BTWC.

Mr. Da Rocha Paranhos (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): I have two statements to make: one on biological weapons and one on chemical weapons. I will begin with biological weapons.

I am taking the floor on behalf of the States parties of MERCOSUR: Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela, and the associated States Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru.

The countries members of MERCOSUR and associated States reaffirm our resolve to contribute to the strengthening of the Biological Weapons Convention. It is clear to us that multilateralism is the best way to strengthen the disarmament and non-proliferation regimes regarding weapons of mass destruction. We recall the Declaration on Security in the Americas, adopted at the special security conference held in Mexico City in October 2003, and resolution 2107 of the General Assembly of the Organization of American States, adopted on 7 June 2005, in which the States of the hemisphere declared their objective of making the Americas a region free of biological and chemical weapons.

Likewise, we recall the Declaration on the South American Zone of Peace and Cooperation, signed in Guayaquil on 27 July 2002, in which the heads of State of South America banned the siting, development, manufacture, possession, deployment, testing and use of all types of weapons of mass destruction, including biological and toxin weapons, as well as their transit through the countries of the region, in accordance with the relevant international conventions.

The countries of MERCOSUR and associated countries express once again the importance of establishing and strengthening efficient national monitoring regimes as an important part of the collective effort to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. Furthermore, we emphasize the role of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) in the context of multilateral regimes to that end.

I should like to highlight the importance of universalization of the Convention and of progress in its implementation, which presupposes efficient follow-up and support mechanisms. Likewise, we

understand that it is essential to develop instruments to strengthen international assistance and cooperation and to strengthen confidence-building measures, including follow-up and support mechanisms with regard to the Convention.

In that connection, we stress that universalization of the Convention and the withdrawal of all reservations to the 1925 Geneva Protocol are important steps towards the fulfilment of the purpose of that instrument and the strengthening of the ban against the use of biological weapons. Moreover, we believe it is essential to promote scientific cooperation and the transfer of technology as incentives for universalization of the Convention.

The countries of MERCOSUR and associated countries agree that it is important to provide the Convention with a verification mechanism. Likewise, in the absence of an international verification mechanism, confidence-building measures are necessary for better and more effective implementation of the Convention's provisions.

The countries of MERCOSUR and the associated countries believe it is essential to continue the work of strengthening the Convention and its implementation beyond the Sixth Review Conference. In that connection, we support the establishment of an administrative unit to provide technical support to States parties. In addition, we urge that the work of the Convention should enjoy broad participation by civil society, the private sector, the scientific community and the relevant international organizations in their respective spheres of competence.

Finally, we express our expectation that the Convention's Sixth Review Conference will formulate recommendations and adopt decisions with a view to strengthening the multilateral legal framework to eliminate any possibility of the existence of biological weapons and to prevent the development of biological and toxin agents as weapons of mass destruction.

I shall now proceed with my statement on behalf of MERCOSUR with regard to chemical weapons. I am again speaking on behalf of the States parties of MERCOSUR: Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela, and the associated States Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru.

At the outset, I should like to reaffirm the commitment of the countries members of MERCOSUR and associated countries to the objectives of disarmament and non-proliferation set out in the Chemical Weapons Convention. MERCOSUR reaffirms its goal of achieving full implementation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), on weapons of mass destruction and non-State actors. We commend the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) for its efforts to achieve universalization of the Convention. To date, those efforts have resulted in the ratification of the Convention by 180 States.

We, the countries of MERCOSUR and associated countries, believe that cooperation among States parties is essential not only to achieve national implementation — including through greater cooperation on the part of developed countries — but also to ensure support for efficient OPCW programmes to develop the scientific capacities of professionals in the sphere of the peaceful use of chemical activity.

We attach particular importance to efforts to improve the Convention's verification and monitoring mechanisms. At the same time, the countries of MERCOSUR and associated countries believe it is essential to intensify cooperation to prevent or punish behaviour that is contrary to the purposes of the Convention. Such cooperation can be provided through support by States parties for the development of legislation permitting the establishment of appropriate monitoring mechanisms, through assistance in the event of a chemical attack and through international cooperation in the criminal field.

Furthermore, we reiterate our appeal to countries possessing chemical weapons to destroy their arsenals. Delay in the destruction of those arsenals is an element that can affect the credibility of the important work being carried out under the Convention.

The countries members of MERCOSUR and associated countries consider that the Convention is an essential tool in the fight against the proliferation of chemical weapons and in efforts to prevent the use of those weapons for terrorist purposes. We thus call for greater cooperation among the States of every region in order to improve border and customs controls, inter alia by training national personnel charged with those tasks.

Ms. Frost (Canada): This statement will address chemical weapons and biological weapons. This debate comes at an important time in the international security

agenda. We must ensure that our two legally binding mechanisms, the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), remain as pertinent as ever to our security.

Next month, States parties to the BTWC will convene in Geneva for the Sixth Review Conference. Ambassador Masood Khan of Pakistan, the President-designate of the Conference, has been working diligently to create the proper environment and conditions for success. We thank Ambassador Khan for his participation today. It is clear that he has established reasonable objectives, and we fully share his commitment to achieving a positive outcome. We urge all States parties to give him their unqualified support in these efforts. There have been significant contributions made to that end. Japan, for example, hosted a conference in February of this year aimed at developing an open dialogue on ways and means to strengthen the norms and implementation of the Convention.

Canada has likewise contributed. We have put forward a package of measures to build accountability within the Convention. Our point of departure is that States Parties to the Convention are accountable to one another in implementing the obligations they each have accepted in becoming States parties and in adopting commitments undertaken together in subsequent Review Conferences. From this perspective, we have identified four areas in which efforts to strengthen the BTWC could be further pursued: national implementation, confidence-building measures, implementation support and annual meetings.

While the measures we are proposing enjoy wide support among States parties, they are not meant to be exhaustive. We note that other States parties, following a similar approach, have put forward important concrete proposals of their own. We should examine carefully all efforts and ideas that will take us towards our common goal of a strengthened Convention.

We are working closely with other States parties in the run-up to the Review Conference. Through such collaboration, we hope to bring increased weight and focus to proposals that build on our accountability framework. Most recently, Canada co-sponsored a conference at Wilton Park in the United Kingdom that brought together a broad range of Government, private sector and academic experts to examine issues surrounding biological weapons and chemical weapons disarmament and non-proliferation.

Turning to the subject of chemical weapons disarmament, we must not become complacent. While the CWC has become a model of a verifiable disarmament agreement, it still faces important challenges. Next month, and again in December, States parties will be asked to address the question of extensions to destruction deadlines. While we might understand the circumstances that have contributed to the necessity for some possessor States to invoke the extension provisions of the Convention, we do not easily accept this request. Even this five-year, one-time-only extension may not be sufficient to ensure the total destruction of all existing stockpiles of chemical weapons. We therefore encourage possessor States to redouble their efforts to rid the world of the threat of chemical weapons by destroying their stockpiles as quickly as feasible.

The Chemical Weapons Convention will have its second Review Conference in April 2008, some 18 months from now. It is not too soon to begin taking stock of the Convention's implementation and examining how States parties might best ensure its continuing relevance as a key element of our security.

I would be remiss if I did not compliment the extensive efforts by Director-General Rogelio Pfirter and the Technical Secretariat of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in pursuing an effective programme of universalization for the Convention.

With the recent accession of its one hundred-eightieth member, the CWC is approaching true universality, thanks to the dedicated work of many people. We will continue to support such efforts until every country has become a State party and is fully implementing its obligations under the Convention.

The arms control and disarmament agenda has suffered disappointments in recent years. We have not been able to achieve the objectives we have set for ourselves. We cannot let this happen again with the BTWC Review Conference. Canada is committed to working closely with Ambassador Khan and all the other States parties to help build a more secure world for all.

Mr. MacKay (New Zealand): I too would thank Ambassador Masood Khan for the very comprehensive

overview that he gave of his plans for the upcoming Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) Review Conference. We see the Review Conference as an opportunity for States to agree on practical implementation measures to take forward the work of the BWC. We are confident that the proposed schedule will facilitate a comprehensive review of the treaty as well as encompassing forward-looking elements.

We are, essentially, looking for ways to ensure that the BWC remains relevant in a dynamic biotechnology environment. To that end, we support the development of an intersessional process which implements work already done on overarching codes of conduct and scientific cooperation and which is flexible enough to accommodate work on any new issues in the Convention's implementation that may arise during the course of the next review period. A strengthened implementation support capacity would result in concrete gains for the Convention's work, particularly in the fields of national implementation and confidence-building measures.

New Zealand also attaches high importance to the work under the Chemical Weapons Convention, and to the implementation work done by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. The eleventh session of the Conference of the States Parties to that Convention will provide an opportunity to evaluate progress. For our part, we will be emphasizing that all chemical weapons stockpiles must be destroyed by 2012, the deadline in the Convention. We will also continue to focus on universalization and implementation of the Convention, particularly in the Pacific, as well as on improving the current methodology for selecting sites for inspections. New Zealand is also making a practical contribution to the destruction of chemical weapons through our contribution to the Group of Eight Global Partnership in Shchuch'ye, Russia.

While I have the floor, let me briefly address the disarmament aspects of outer space. It is in all our interests to preserve space for the development of peaceful technologies and scientific exploration. Preventing the weaponization of outer space is fundamental to safeguarding our ability to access space resources, both now and in the future. New Zealand supports work towards a more comprehensive legal framework regulating the demilitarization of outer space. Arguments that there is no current arms race in space and therefore no need to address this issue ignore the preventive benefits of adopting a precautionary approach. As an interim step, in our view, there is an important role for transparency and confidence-building measure with regard to outer space.

Mr. Cheng Jingye (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): My statement relates to the issue of outer space.

Next year marks the fortieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Outer Space Treaty. Over the decades, the Treaty — the first important step taken by the international community to safeguard the security of outer space — has played a significant role in ensuring the peaceful uses of outer space. Given the rapid development of outer space science and technology, the international community is faced with the pressing task of strengthening the effectiveness and universality of the Outer Space Treaty so as to better preserve the sustainable peace and security of outer space. This is an issue which we need to consider, explore and address through appropriate and proactive measures.

Over the past five decades, humankind has come a long way in the exploration and utilization of outer space, and the significant achievements thus made have helped to advance human civilization. Today, outer space, like the land, the ocean and the sky, has become an integral part of our lives — one on which we increasingly depend.

During the twenty-first century, a growing number of countries will take part in and benefit from the exploration and utilization of outer space. More than ever, the sustainable peace of outer space is closely linked with each and every country's security, development and prosperity. As the Chinese President, Mr. Hu Jintao, pointed out on the occasion of the thirty-sixth Scientific Assembly of the Committee on Space Research (COSPAR), outer space is the common heritage of humankind; the exploration, peaceful utilization and exploitation of outer space is the common right of all peoples; and ensuring that outer space remains peaceful and clean is the common obligation of humankind.

Every year the General Assembly adopts a draft resolution on this issue by an overwhelming majority — a fact that explicitly reflects the common aspirations and determination of the peoples of the world. What is worrying, however, is that since the exploitation of outer space began, the spectre of the weaponization of and an arms race in outer space has

been haunting the international community. Given the continuous development of space science and technology, this danger looms larger with each passing day.

A world free from outer space weapons is no less important than a world free from weapons of mass destruction. History has repeatedly shown that prevention is more effective and less costly than cure. We have already encountered many obstacles on the difficult path towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Humankind must not be allowed to sink into the morass of the weaponization of outer space as a result of our inaction now.

To conclude a new international legal instrument to close the loopholes in the existing legal framework relating to outer space is the only effective way of coping with the challenges of the weaponization of outer space. For 10 consecutive years, the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva established and re-established its Ad Hoc Committee on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, accumulating rich experience in dealing with the issue of outer space in an appropriate manner.

We note with satisfaction that this year the Conference on Disarmament conducted an important, meaningful, structured and focused debate on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. During the debate, a majority of States members of the Conference expressed their concerns about the trend towards the weaponization of and an arms race in outer space, and voiced their support for the Conference on Disarmament's engaging in substantive work on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Many countries sent experts to the discussions, and several countries — including China, the Russian Federation and Canada — submitted working documents on the issue. During the debate, in-depth and extensive exchanges of views from the political, legal, technological and financial angles on issues concerning a future legal instrument — including definitions, scope, verification, confidence-building measures and the security of real assets in outer space — were conducted among all parties. The debate had a fruitful outcome, and showed that the international community's awareness of the importance of preventing the weaponization of outer space is increasing and that common ground on concluding a new legal instrument is expanding.

It is also noteworthy that, in March this year, China, the Russian Federation, Canada and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, as well as the Simons Foundation of Canada, once again co-sponsored an international conference on outer space. At that conference, the theme of which was "Building the architecture for sustainable space security", participants engaged in heated and frank discussions on topics such as threats to the peaceful uses of outer space, approaches for ensuring space security, et cetera. The many constructive proposals and ideas that were put forward will serve as useful references for future work in the Conference on Disarmament.

China believes that the Conference on Disarmament should re-establish an ad hoc committee on the prevention of an arms race in outer space at an early date so that substantive work can be conducted on the issue of the prevention of the weaponization of outer space. That would be the best way to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the Outer Space Treaty. We are looking forward to the early achievement of that goal.

China is ready to join with all other States in continuing our unremitting efforts to that end.

Mr. Streuli (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I would like to thank Ambassador Masood Khan for his presentation, which held my delegation's attention. I am pleased to work with him and look forward to working under his presidency during the next Review Conference of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention.

During the general debate, I stressed the fact that biological weapons are a source of great concern for my country. Indeed, knowledge and technology in the area of biotechnology and genetic sciences are evolving rapidly, in both the civilian and the military fields, with the consequence that there is a growing risk of abuse. In the view of Switzerland, the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) is the essential framework, allowing us to hold discussions aimed at dealing with and preventing, in a coordinated fashion, the biological threat — whether it comes from a State or from elsewhere. We therefore appeal to all States that have not yet signed or ratified the BTWC or the 1925 Geneva Protocol to do so soon as possible.

We also appeal once again to all States members of the BTWC to find common ground during the next Review Conference. In particular, we would like a follow-up process to be established that would make it possible to strengthen and ensure respect for the Convention.

Switzerland will certainly make an active and constructive contribution to the success of the Review Conference. From that perspective, my delegation is drafting a working document on confidence-building measures, and to that end we are holding informal consultations.

I would like to take this opportunity also to reaffirm my country's commitment to the Convention on Chemical Weapons — the only disarmament treaty that bans an entire category of weapons of mass destruction and whose implementation is effective. Switzerland welcomes the progress achieved since its entry into force and actively supports the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). We are particularly pleased to note that, through the open-ended working group, delegations to the OPCW are already making preparations for the second Review Conference, which is to be held in 2008. We hope that cooperation will be as fruitful and constructive in the context of the Chemical Weapons Convention as it was with respect to the Biological Weapons Convention, which next month in Geneva will be the subject of a sixth Review Conference.

Mr. Luaces (United States of America): Over the past several decades, the use of outer space has become increasingly important to all aspects of international commerce, peace and security. The information revolution that has transformed the global economy depends to a very large extent on our collective advances in space, including in the fields of communications, navigation and remote sensing.

The increased importance of outer space to both commerce and national security has given rise to a number of concerns around the world, including the potential vulnerability of space systems to disruption from both natural and manmade sources.

The international community must recognize, as the United States does, that protection of space access is a key objective. We consider space capabilities to be vital to our national interests, whether these capabilities are in ground or space segments, which include the supporting links of such networks.

Space systems should be able to pass through, and operate in, space without interference. It is critical to preserve freedom of action in space, and the United States is committed to ensuring that our freedom of action in space remains unhindered. All countries should share this interest in unfettered access to and use of space and in dissuading or deterring others from impeding either access to or use of space for peaceful purposes or the development of capabilities intended to serve that purpose.

In that spirit, President Bush recently authorized a new national space policy that sets forth the guiding principles of United States space programmes and activities and is designed to re-energize our efforts to develop and maintain robust and effective space capabilities for civil, commercial and national security purposes.

The United States recognizes the critical importance of space access and use for our economy and our national security. This new policy statement reaffirms our long-standing commitment to ensuring peaceful access to and use of space.

The modern world relies upon this free right of passage in space. We all should be committed to that right, because to lose access to space would have profound consequences for the global economy and our everyday lives. Technology derived from our accomplishments in space touches nearly every aspect of everyday life. From cars to planes, from the farmer's crops to the soldier's battlefield awareness, space technology has had a far-reaching impact on our lives.

These are important principles to bear in mind. The danger against which we all must be vigilant is not some theoretical arms race in space but threats that would deny peaceful access to and use of space, especially ground-based space-denial capabilities intended to impede the free access to and use of space systems and services, because any satellite capable of manoeuvring can be used to destroy another satellite simply by physical collision. Space does not lend itself to an old-style "arms-control" approach. In fact, such an approach could be counterproductive if it were to create restrictions upon free access to space and erode the important principles of free transit and operations in space.

For these reasons, the United States opposes proposed negotiations on the so-called prevention of an arms race in outer space. Indeed, the international

community should oppose, and the United States will oppose, the development of new legal regimes or other restrictions that seek to prohibit or limit access to or use of space.

Our views on this matter are clear and easily summarized.

First, there is no arms race in space.

Secondly, there is no prospect of an arms race in space.

Thirdly, the United States will continue to protect its access to and use of space.

The international community must recognize and act upon its vital interest in preserving free access to and use of this crucial medium. Yet our cooperation should not be limited to imposing restrictions on free access to and use of space. We also should continue to work together to advance international space cooperation to improve the global community's use of space.

The United States already has a number of efforts under way to help safeguard and improve the peaceful uses of outer space for all. For example, the United States provides information on objects in space through a public-domain website. We have led the way in negotiating guidelines for mitigating the dangers to space operations presented by orbital debris. We also have extended assistance to other space-faring nations by offering help in collision avoidance, such as during China's first two manned space launches.

In addition, in order to help avoid the damaging effects that solar weather can have on radio frequency communications, we provide free information to all through a website of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration on solar radiation storms and radio blackouts. These are just a few examples of what the United States is doing to help make space safer and more productive for all States.

The international community should follow the example of the United States and explore additional ways to cooperate. Our new national space policy recognizes the importance of international cooperation and continues to emphasize its importance. In fact, this is the core of the United States' national space policy. We recognize our vital national interest in unhindered access to and use of space, and we are firmly committed to protecting it. At the same time, we remain dedicated to improving the ways in which all States can benefit from this invaluable medium of space in service of economic development, scientific advancement and international peace and security.

Mr. Chang Dong-hee (Republic of Korea): I thank Ambassador Masood Khan, President-designate of the forthcoming Sixth Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) Review Conference, for his excellent presentation, which was very useful and informative. I look forward to working closely with him during the Review Conference.

The Biological Weapons Convention remains the fundamental legal and normative foundation for our collective endeavours to prohibit and prevent the use of biological and bio-toxic weapons. However, as stated by Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who was quoted by Ambassador Khan in his presentation, with advances in biotechnology and the life sciences as well as their widespread availability, there is a greater risk that proliferators, both State and non-State, might take advantage of loopholes inherent in the BWC. In the light of the potential threats posed by these developments, there is an urgent need to reinforce the BWC. This is indeed imperative if we wish to address these new challenges adequately, while still maximizing the benefits of biotechnology for peaceful uses.

That is why my delegation attaches particular importance to the upcoming Sixth Review Conference, to be held in November. Following the failure of the previous Review Conference, in 2001, my delegation hopes that the Conference this year will provide us with a fresh opportunity to assess how the Convention in its entirety has been working for the past 10 years. Through a comprehensive article-by-article review of the Convention, we should identify the areas in which additional work and cooperation among States parties are needed. States parties should explore ways to ensure full implementation and to enhance the effectiveness of the Convention.

In this regard, our discussions over the past three years attest to the value of intersessional work, which we believe should continue beyond the Sixth Review Conference. Indeed, it would be constructive for the intersessional work to be conducted on a more regular and more formal basis. Proceeding in this way would ensure increased continuity between Review Conferences.

Moreover, we should also seriously consider ways to further promote universal adherence and national implementation of the Convention, particularly of the confidence-building measures it sets out. To that end, the Republic of Korea is drawing up a working paper on the universalization of the Convention, which we will circulate in due course. Our efforts to ensure the prohibition of biological weapons, combat their proliferation and secure the viability of the BWC regime demand a successful outcome of the upcoming Review Conference. My delegation calls on all States parties to show flexibility and take an open-minded approach so that we can achieve significant tangible results.

Turning to the matter of chemical weapons, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) is held in high regard by the international community as a model for disarmament and non-proliferation organizations. My delegation believes that the efforts of possessor States towards the non-discriminative destruction of their chemical weapons have greatly contributed to that positive appraisal. My delegation is confident that all possessor States are fully committed to making their best efforts to complete the destruction of their chemical weapons stockpiles as soon as possible. We understand that stockpile destruction may be delayed by domestic factors such as environmental protection requirements and concerns for the safety of workers involved in the destruction process. Nevertheless, we note that the Convention clearly stipulates that in no case shall the deadline for a State party to complete its destruction of all chemical weapons be extended beyond April 2012. We urge all possessor States, without any exception, to do their utmost to meet that obligation.

To achieve the fundamental goal of the Convention, namely the total destruction of all chemical weapons worldwide, universal accession is obviously necessary, and this has been a top priority for the OPCW. In this regard, my delegation greatly appreciates the efforts of the OPCW Director-General and Technical Secretariat to achieve the goal, set at the tenth Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), of increasing the number of States parties to 180 by the end of this year.

With some countries still remaining outside the Convention, our challenges have not yet been overcome. As long as those countries choose to remain outside the framework of the CWC, the serious threat of chemical weapons is still with us. We therefore urge those countries to respond to the call from the OPCW immediately and without conditions. We also encourage the OPCW to strengthen its efforts to persuade those countries to participate in the Convention as soon as possible.

As for national implementation of the CWC, my delegation appreciates the progress that has been made to ensure full implementation of the Convention by States parties and commends the Technical Secretariat for the assistance it has provided. However, we must not become complacent. In the light of the increasing threat of terrorist attacks involving weapons of mass destruction, States parties should be especially vigilant in their full implementation of the Convention to ensure that no chemical weapons fall into the wrong hands. We urge all States parties to adopt national CWC implementation measures as soon as possible.

Mr. Meyer (Canada): Let me first, Madam Chairperson, express my appreciation for your efforts to try to organize our thematic debate this afternoon by separating out two very distinct cluster topics, the first being on other weapons of mass destruction, under which we normally discuss biological and chemical weapons issues, and the second being missiles and outer space. I think it is very much in keeping with the reform aims of the Committee that we extract more value and greater coherence from our thematic debate portion when we can stick to addressing one topic at a time. In that regard, I would hope that delegations could organize themselves in the future so that we do not mix, so to speak, the poisoned apples of biological weapons with the orbiting oranges of outer space.

My statement today is focused on outer space and the disarmament aspects thereof. The lack in recent years of an ad hoc committee on the prevention of an arms race in outer space at the Conference on Disarmament has not prevented some worthwhile discussion and proposals from being generated — proposals which we have a responsibility to consider and, where appropriate, to act upon.

Discussions held at the space security seminar organized by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research in March, the series of structured discussions in the Conference on Disarmament during its past session in June and discussion here in the First Committee, taken together, reinforce, in our view, the need to develop an

increasingly broad concept of space security that addresses not only the weaponization of outer space but also the broader military, environmental, commercial and civil dimensions of space.

When we talk about ensuring secure and sustainable access to and use of space for peaceful purposes, we are in fact using such a broad approach to space security. As we all draw ever-increasing benefits from space assets, Canada believes strongly that spacefaring and non-spacefaring nations alike share a stake and a responsibility in ensuring that human actions do not jeopardize the current and future benefits offered to us by outer space.

To this end, we continue to believe that the work of the international community could be optimized by enhancing dialogue between the various United Nations bodies with an interest in outer space. Such dialogue would include, for example, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, the International Telecommunication Union, the Conference on Disarmament and this General Assembly, particularly its First and Fourth Committees.

Regarding the development of cooperative activity that would enhance secure and sustainable access to and the use of space for peaceful purposes, two areas merit special consideration in our view. A key element of a multilateral architecture for space security would be negotiation in the Conference on Disarmament of an appropriately scoped, legally binding ban on space-based weapons. Canada welcomes the contribution that many delegations have made in the discussions to date on what such a negotiated treaty would look like and what it would need in terms of definitions, scope, verification, participation and so forth. Expert presentations on these and other elements of a space-based weapons ban continue to be needed in order to build consensus within the Conference on the way forward. In this regard, I would note that Canada provided two working papers to last June's space week at the Conference on Disarmament, one devoted to a legal gap analysis of international restraints in outer space and the other on space-based verification.

Canada believes that the sheer growth of space activities world-wide and the commercial as well as national security benefits derived from space activities provide a strong rationale and incentive for the global community to work cooperatively in ensuring that such benefits are maintained. Developing rules of the road, space debris mitigation guidelines, more coordinated space traffic management — these are some of the ideas that could contribute to this end. Indeed, a number of such ideas are starting to gain interest or are already under consideration — not only in the Conference on Disarmament, but elsewhere, such as in the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

As a means of dispelling potential misperceptions about space activities, transparency and confidence-building measures hold promise, particularly if they are used in a non-interfering or non-intrusive manner, yet remain robust enough to give States a degree of reassurance about the intent and purpose of space launches. If designed properly, confidence-building measures relating to outer space can indeed enhance the safety of space assets, especially if such measures focus on the conduct and cooperative management of space activity.

In order to stimulate wide-ranging discussion of the merits of developing and applying confidence-building measures for outer space, Canada has put together a short paper pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/66, which the Russian Federation introduced, listing some of the types of transparency and confidence-building measures relating to outer space that have been developed and applied, both bilaterally and multilaterally. We have also included a couple of ideas regarding confidence-building measures that have been raised in the past as illustrations of the range of thinking on this subject. A copy of this paper is appended to my statement and is being distributed in the hall.

Canada believes that the international community's collective interest in preserving secure and sustainable access to and use of space, free of space-based threats, requires preventive diplomacy as well as discussion. Redoubling our efforts to build mutual confidence and ensure space security is our collective challenge. I am hopeful that our discussions here in the First Committee, and subsequently in other forums, including the Conference on Disarmament, will move us closer to meeting that challenge.

Mr. Paulsen (Norway): The interactive debate last Monday clearly illustrated that the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) is achieving impressive results. We must continue our ceaseless efforts to rid the world from chemical weapons. We urge the few

remaining countries that have not joined the Convention to do so without delay.

The CWC not only promotes the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, but also serves as an essential instrument for disarmament. It is, therefore, essential that the destruction of chemical weapons and the conversion of chemical weapons production facilities are carried out within the agreed time limits.

Lessons drawn from the CWC are highly relevant for the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC). That does not, however, imply that everything done in the CWC can be applied to the BWC. The upcoming Review Conference of the BWC offers us an opportunity to further consolidate the norms set by the Convention, as well as the 1925 Geneva Protocol. In this respect it is important that we base our deliberations on the good work done under the programme of work that was adopted in 2002.

Together with like-minded countries, Norway will advocate the adoption of practical and doable measures. There are a number of areas that will make a valuable contribution to the well-functioning and further strengthening of the Biological Weapons Convention. Let me highlight some of them.

We need an intersessional programme of work, which allows States parties to address existing as well as emerging challenges. We need to refine and improve the confidence-building measures. More countries should provide annual reports. Reporting should be considered an obligation and not an option. We must clearly put in greater efforts to universalize the Biological Weapons Convention. Here we have much to learn from the CWC experience.

Likewise we should draw on the experiences from the CWC in promoting national implementation. This obligation is also clearly stated in Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). Preventing bioterrorism is one of the objectives of that resolution. We need more dialogue on how to advance article X of the Biological Weapons Convention on assistance.

It goes without saying that well-functioning primary health systems provide the best defence against diseases. We must develop preventive measures such as codes of conduct for those involved in the life sciences. We must build on what has been achieved during the current programme of work.

We must further strengthen response and investigating mechanisms in cases of alleged use of biological weapons. We need to ensure that States parties are adequately serviced by a well-functioning support unit. We greatly appreciate the contribution by the Department for Disarmament Affairs so far, but we believe that more resources should be put into a support unit.

Let me also underline that the Biological Weapons Convention community should enhance partnerships with relevant actors, such as the World Health Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Organization for Animal Health. At the same time we have to be sensitive to the mandates of these institutions. Norway remains convinced in the wisdom of increased involvement of the International Committee of the Red Cross and civil society.

Finally, my delegation would like to express its appreciation to Ambassador Masood Khan for the way he chaired the meeting in the preparatory committee for the Review Conference. I would also like to thank him for his comprehensive presentation today. Under Ambassador Khan's very able guidance, the States parties managed to agree on the modalities for the Review Conference. This augurs well for a positive outcome of the Review Conference. We appeal to all States parties to go the extra mile to ensure such a success.

Mr. Koshelev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Frankly speaking, there has been some confusion as a result of the combination of two very important topics. For us, both the topic of other weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and the question of outer space are very important. We would, therefore, first like to set out our approach to the question of other weapons of mass destruction and reserve the right to speak separately on outer space.

Allow me, once again, to thank Ambassador Masood Khan of Pakistan for his detailed and interesting presentation. This leads us to hope that the sixth Review Conference under the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization will be in reliable hands.

The Russian Federation is in favour of strengthening the multilateral bases for addressing the challenges of disarmament and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), in strict

observance of international agreements in this area. We need to strengthen the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as we said yesterday and we attach great importance to the strict observance of the Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare (Geneva Protocol of 1925), the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC). The need for urgent action in the area of the destruction of chemical and the non-proliferation of biological weapons is driven today above all by the danger of their falling into the hands of terrorists.

We feel that the Geneva Protocol of 1925 is still very topical and current. Measures aimed at helping to strengthen its regime would include to remove reservations expressed by States when ratifying the document. Russia has withdrawn such reservations. We call on other parties to the Protocol to reject the use of chemical or biological weapons as a retaliatory measure.

We consider the CWC as a key element in the system of international security. In the more than ten years of its existence it has convincingly proven its importance in sparing the world of the most lethal form of weapons. It has been an effective instrument for curbing the proliferation of chemical weapons. It has also proven its positive potential for increasing cooperation in the peaceful use of technology and knowledge in the area of chemistry.

Russia abides by its disarmament obligations and is consistently implementing them. We are doing everything possible to complete the elimination of chemical arsenals within the deadlines provided for in the Convention. In September 2006, we put a third Russian chemical weapons destruction facility into operation. In the near future, we will cross an important threshold by having destroyed 10 per cent of the Russian stockpiles of toxic substances.

I need to stress that the task of destroying chemical weapons on the scale that Russia faces cannot be dealt with by one State alone. We are constantly expanding State financing for research programmes for the destruction of chemical weapons. At the same time, we would like to express our gratitude to all countries that have been giving assistance in the elimination of chemical arsenals. Such assistance is extremely important. Russia receives such helpful financial and technical assistance from the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Sweden, Finland, Norway, Italy, Poland, Switzerland, Canada, the Czech Republic, the European Union and New Zealand.

However, I should like to note that today we still have an acute problem of increasing the effectiveness of such actions. I would like to focus attention on the fact that the main assistance will be needed from 2006 to 2008, when we will be engaged in the most active phase of our construction of industrial facilities to destroy chemical weapons.

An important priority of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons in The Hague is achieving the Convention's universality. Recently, in this room, the General-Director, Mr. Pfirter, noted that only 15 States remain outside the Convention and that the implementation of the Action Plan to promote universality will play a substantial role in expanding State participation.

The necessary element for the stable functioning of the CWC is the adoption by each Member State of national measures to implement the Convention's provisions. We are ready to give assistance to other States in developing national legislation and in sharing the experience that we have acquired. We have developed such cooperation within the Commonwealth of Independent States.

In the context of efforts to prevent the proliferation of biological weapons, we have consistently supported the implementation of the regime established by the BWC. An important stage towards this end is the sixth Review Conference coming at the end of this year. We believe that the Review Conference should be a detailed review, article by article, of the operation of the Convention and the tangible steps to be taken during the next five-year period to enhance the effectiveness of its activities. We still feel that the most effective method for strengthening the Convention is the resumption of work of its verification mechanisms under a legally binding document. It would make it possible to implement effective and objective verification of the observance of the Convention by all States parties.

Without a consensus on this question, we would be in favour of continuing intersessional work, with annual meetings of experts and of States parties to the

Convention. That approach worked well in the years 2003-2005.

An important measure helping to prevent the proliferation of biological weapons would be a further universalization of the BWC. Therefore, we call on States that have not yet done so to adhere to it.

In the context of non-proliferation of chemical and biological weapons, and, above all, the urgent need to prevent their falling into the hands of non-State actors, particularly terrorists, we need to attach prime importance to the full implementation by all States of the provisions of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). This resolution is aimed at creating at the national level developed legislative, law enforcement and organizational measures to ensure the safety, integrity and physical security not only of chemical weapons, but also materials associated with chemical and biological weapons, namely, dual-use materials and technologies.

The transfer of any of these weapons is not very likely and the main threat of proliferation is now to be found from the uncontrolled trafficking and the risk of the leakage of dual-use chemical and biological substances. In this connection, of particular importance are the provisions of resolution 1540 (2004) on the need to create and strengthen verification measures on export and trans-border transport of such materials. We actively support the work of the Security Council Committee set up under resolution 1540 (2004).

We view positively the draft resolutions proposed by Poland and Hungary in support of the CWC and the BWC and we feel that we can support them.

Mr. Rivasseau (France) (*spoke in French*): Permit me to congratulate you on your skilful leadership of our discussions. I would like to refer to the 1925 Geneva Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, which has 134 States Parties. The final declaration of a French-Swiss seminar on the occasion of the eightieth anniversary of that Protocol, held in Geneva in June 2005, called for withdrawal of all reservations to that Protocol. As you know, France is the depositary for that Protocol and withdrew its reservations in 1996. We consider that the Protocol's provisions have the force of customary law.

France would like to introduce a non-paper, which, of course, we would like to make available to delegations. I would like to read it out, because it is sufficiently short to do so.

> "The Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare, opened for signature in Geneva on 17 June 1925 and for which France is the depositary, is the ancestor of the two pillars of current disarmament instruments: the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and the 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). Meeting both the needs of mankind and the aims of disarmament and non-proliferation, that Protocol continues to be current, especially in the biological sphere, where it is the only text to prohibit explicitly the use of biological weapons. The ancient date of the Protocol — last year was its eightieth anniversary — explains why certain States have not recently given great attention to this Protocol or to their status in relation to its provisions. In recent years, nonetheless, many States have withdrawn their reservations. Only 22 States maintain their reservations today, and those reservations are often incompatible with their obligations under the framework of the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention and the 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention.
>
> "France, therefore, invites all States Parties that made reservations when adhering to the Protocol to re-consider in a constructive manner and to ensure the comprehensive prohibition of chemical and biological weapons the withdrawal of their reservations."

As general information, France is making available an Internet site that lists all the States Parties to the Protocol, as well as an updated official list of reservations. That information can be consulted at www.doc.diplomatie.gouv.fr/pacte under the section on multilateral treaties, France depositaire, tab number 15.

Ms. Millar (Australia): At the outset, I would like to extend my delegation's thanks to Ambassador Khan for his informative and useful presentations on the forthcoming Review Conference on the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC). The BWC Review Conference provides a vital opportunity for the international community to strengthen its defences

against the proliferation of biological and toxin weapons. It is an opportunity that we can ill afford to squander; all the more so while the threat from bio-terrorism persists.

Australia has been a long-standing advocate for the full and effective implementation of the BWC — as we have been for other complimentary measures, including the Proliferation Security Initiative and the Australia Group. And so, we will approach the BWC Review Conference with clear aims to strengthen the Treaty and ensure its continuing relevance to the security needs of its parties. To this end, Australia will be encouraging States Parties to fulfil their obligations under the Convention and Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) to prohibit and prevent the development and production of biological agents and toxins.

Of particular importance is the need for States Parties to examine national implementation of the Convention. States need to have in place the necessary legislative, administrative and enforcement measures to ensure effective implementation of the BWC and confidence among its States Parties. With this in mind, Australia will propose that States Parties designate a national authority to coordinate domestic compliance with the BWC and act as a single liaison point for contact between States Parties. We will also encourage a close examination of the BWC confidence-building measures (CBMs). The CBMs are a vital transparency measure, but we must increase the participation in and the value of the CBM process to ensure its continued relevance in an environment of rapidly evolving security threats and technology.

National implementation of the BWC is vital to its continuing relevance. But we must also take care of the institution of the Convention itself. Australia has found the intersessional process since the fifth Review Conference to be valuable. We look to a decision this year on a further, focused intersessional process, leading to the Review Conference in 2011. Such a process should have practical benefits for implementation of the Convention and should meet the security needs of States Parties. Moreover, this process should be assisted by a continuation and enhancement of the support provided to States Parties through the BWC meetings Secretariat. Not only could such a unit assist with meetings, but it might also help in such areas as universalization and CBM management.

The BWC is strong, but we must do more to realise its universalization and strengthen its effectiveness against the spread of biological weapons. With this in mind, Australia will put forward an action plan for the universalization of the BWC at the Review Conference. The plan will offer clear and practical steps States Parties can take to encourage and assist States to join this vital convention.

Australia's action plan is just one example of the positive approach States Parties are taking to the Review Conference. Australia, with Japan, Canada, the Republic of Korea, Switzerland, Norway and New Zealand, has already begun preparation of papers on other issues. We welcome the contributions of the European Union and Latin American countries to prepare for the meeting. We sincerely hope that with such a positive approach, States Parties will make the most of the BWC Review Conference to strengthen global defences against the proliferation of biological and toxin weapons.

Ms. Leong (Venezuela) (*spoke in Spanish*): Our statement will refer to the question of outer space. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela wishes to reiterate its full support for the designation of outer space as the common heritage of mankind and, in particular, for reserving its use for exclusively peaceful purposes. In this regard, we note with great concern the position of several countries in favour of the emplacement of various military systems in outer space of both offensive and defensive nature. That would endanger the collective security of mankind, in addition to violating the principle, which considers this zone to be the common heritage of mankind, as established in the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies.

Our country has signed the Outer Space Treaty, the Rescue Agreement and the Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects. In addition to this, we are a party to other international instruments related to space, such as the (1963) Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water, an agreement with the International Telecommunications Satellite Organization (INTELSAT) and the International Telecommunications Union Convention. This is the legal framework that guides our international action in matters of outer space.

In this regard, we hope that the negotiations held within the Conference on Disarmament for the purpose of achieving an international instrument to prevent an arms race in outer space may reach completion and succeed. Furthermore, our country considers that States that possess an important technological capacity in space should renounce the emplacement of any military system, defensive or offensive, in outer space. They should also agree to furnish information about their activities in this regard. We support the adoption of more transparency measures and confidence-building measures in activities relating to outer space.

Venezuela is fully committed to the principles which promote the use of outer space exclusively for peaceful purposes. In November 2005, our Government authorized the establishment of the Foundation for the Venezuelan Space Centre. It was established on 3 February 2006. This foundation is aimed at the design, coordination and implementation of the policies of our executive branch dealing with the peaceful use of outer space, and will act as the national specialized decentralized agency in matters of air and space.

In this regard, we wish to emphasize the cooperation agreement for the implementation of the project on the peaceful use of space between our Government and the People's Republic of China, which provides for the acquisition, by Venezuela, of the Simón Bolívar satellite, and the establishment of a space centre within the country. This marks the beginning of our national experience beyond the Earth's skies through a State policy based on peaceful purposes and a social vision. This space cooperation agreement is aimed at the development of space technologies, which spearhead the promotion and the development of the social policies of our national Government.

In sum, Venezuela maintains that a real commitment that seeks to prevent an arms race in outer space is inextricably linked to a strengthening of international cooperation, with a view to establishing an international regime based on a binding instrument that guarantees egalitarian respect for their provisions by all countries and which ensures an equitable and well balanced access to the scientific and technological benefits, derived from the peaceful use of outer space. There is no doubt that the United Nations and the Commission on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space have a fundamental role to play in the achievement of these objectives.

Mr. Vasiliev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Firstly, I would like to stress, once again, that we would feel it useful to hold a discussion on each thematic cluster. By mixing two clusters into one discussion period, it makes it hard for us to focus on a discussion of one theme.

The prevention of the arms race in outer space is a priority for the Russian Federation. It is a major and urgent problem. This year, we were again among the sponsors of a draft resolution on preventing the arms race in outer space. The timeliness of this draft is not only not shrinking, but is, in fact, growing.

This year, at the Conference on Disarmament, there was an interesting, detailed and successful debate on the question on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. This showed that all States are interested in outer space not being turned into a battlefield, that security in space be ensured and that there will also be proper functioning of space objects. This allows us to feel that we can achieve consensus on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

This is a most important question directly effecting the interests of security and development of all States. If we look at this objectively and in an unbiased way, then of all of the items of the agenda for the Conference on Disarmament, the question of the prevention of an arms race in outer space met with the greatest unanimity among delegations. On the other hand, however, the number of delegations that still had doubts about the importance of immediately resuming work on the prevention of an arms race in outer space was the smallest that we have ever had.

I say this without detriment to the discussion of other issues discussed at the Conference on Disarmament. Since this year as well, the discussions again confirmed that the resumption of substantive work on the Conference on Disarmament is only possible with balanced agreement on its programme of work. During the debate interesting, weighty and profound comments and proposals were made relating to the proposal of the Russian Federation and China to develop a treaty on the prevention of the emplacement of weapons in outer space and the use of force or the threat of the use of force against space objects and on measures for transparency in confidence building and space activities, including in the context of this treaty.

The idea of a new treaty has been discussed for more than four years in the Conference on Disarmament. During the various activities of the thematic meetings on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, representatives of more than 20 delegations and regional groups spoke and nine working papers were presented. With the help of experts from seven participating States, we were able to plan the work of the special committee of the Conference on Disarmament on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, where both the substantive and political aspects will be taken into account. After more than 20 years of consideration of this topic in the Conference on Disarmament, we have made tangible progress in resolving and developing solutions to problems in that area.

More importantly, the Conference concluded that it should, as soon as possible, resume its substantive work on the question of the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We are at a stage when it is counter-productive to wait until the issue is mature. Frankly, when this question matures, it will already be too late. We must do everything to ensure that this question never becomes mature.

Many delegations at the Conference on Disarmament agreed with the idea of concentrating future work of the Conference with regard to the question of the prevention of an arms race in outer space or an existing practical proposal, namely, to develop a new treaty on the prevention of deployment of weapons in outer space and on the threat or the use of force against space objects are the main elements contained in document CD/1679. In that connection and given the results of the debate we had in the Conference on Disarmament, we would like to clarify once again for all Member States of the United Nations, the thrust of the new treaty that is being proposed in CD/1679. Firstly, I would like to say that we are not proposing a treaty to prevent an arms race in outer space. Our idea is not a treaty on preventing an arms race in outer space. To call our initiative that would not be correct. It would be closer to the truth to call the new treaty on the non-weaponization of outer space or a treaty on the non-stationing of weapons in outer space, although that would not be its final name.

The aim here is simple. We are trying to resolve the problem differently. If we prohibit weapons in outer space and all States observe that prohibition, then there is no arms race in outer space. An arms race is not possible in a sphere where there is a general prohibition on weapons. In other words, in solving the question of the non-weaponization of space, we erect a barrier against an arms race in outer space. However, that is not sufficient. We also believe that interfering in the regular functioning of space objects could be done without the use of space weapons, it could be done using weapons based elsewhere or other actions not involving weapons. In order to protect space objects from such threats and prevent any other actions involving the use of force in space, we propose to augment the prohibition of the weaponization of outer space by adding one more obligation, namely, the non-use of force or the threat of force against space objects. It would therefore be more correct to call our proposal a new treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the use of force or threat of use of force against space objects.

In document CD/1679 there are three main obligations that form the specific scope of the proposed treaty. The first is not to launch any object with any kind of weapon into Earth orbit, place such a weapon on a celestial body or place them in space in any other manner. Secondly, not to resort to the use of force, or the threat of the use of force against space objects. Thirdly, not to cooperate with or incite other States, groups of States or international organizations to participate in activities that are prohibited under the treaty. Those key elements represent a step forward in international law in ensuring the peaceful status of outer space and ensuring free access to space, security in space and the normal functioning of space objects.

During the discussions in the Conference on Disarmament, we considered in detail the possible concrete contents of each of the obligations. During the discussion, on the main elements proposed for the new treaty we also discussed the main terms and their definitions. Various versions emerged in that area. Regardless of which versions will ultimately be chosen by all of the interested countries, we made and discussed various concrete proposals on the definition of certain key terms of the future treaty, as contained in document CD/1679. Those terms include "outer space", "space object", "weapon in space" and others.

We wanted very briefly to present the scope of the new treaty and some of its other elements, so we could illustrate the nature of the discussions that took place in the Conference on Disarmament. The discussions were professional and substantive and were

aimed at achieving practical results. Of course, there are still specific questions that need further work and delegations have retained those issues for further review at home. It is important that the framework for future detailed work has been clarified. It is also important that the discussions showed the realism and practical feasibility of the provisions of the new treaty. It is not aimed at prohibiting or limiting anything that States now have in space. It is strictly preventive in nature — as we say concerning an illness, prevention is easier than a cure.

We are certain the proposed measures in the new treaty are in the interest of all States, without exception, and we are ready to continue to convince others of that. In any case, any decisions or agreements should be reached based upon consensus and, to that end, Russia will continue its active efforts.

It is now time to move from general words to concrete issues and concrete treatises. I recall that all of the documents and materials in the discussions this year in the Conference on Disarmament on the topic of the prevention of an arms race in outer space are available on the Internet. We invite all States and interested organizations to continue to cooperate closely. We also call upon delegations to prepare seriously and in time for continuing the work in the Conference on Disarmament in 2007 on the topic proposed in document CD/1679, namely, the treaty on the prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space and of the threat or use of force against space objects.

I will conclude by reiterating that the placement of weapons in outer space could bring great evil to all. We must not allow that and we can do that.

Mr. Adji (Indonesia): I will limit my intervention to biological and chemical weapons. First of all, I would like to thank Ambassador Khan of Pakistan, the President-designate of the Sixth Review Conference of the Parties to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) for his informative and comprehensive presentation. I am confident that he will guide the forthcoming Review Conference to a positive outcome.

With regard to biological weapons, Indonesia calls upon States parties to the BTWC to restart negotiations on the protocol of the Convention. In 2001, we unfortunately witnessed the failure of the negotiations on the protocol that would have provided States parties with compliance measures and verification mechanisms. We now need to double our efforts to ensure that the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention remains a vital and effective element of the international response to the threat of biological weapons.

In the absence of a protocol, Indonesia and Australia have co-hosted a regional workshop, whose objective was to highlight the importance as well as facilitate a greater understanding of the need by the States parties in the region to implement the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, so that our common objectives could be fulfilled. The workshop was also organized to encourage countries in the region to recognize the security benefits derived from the full and effective implementation of the Convention.

We believe that it remains the responsibility of States to take effective measures to prevent the misuse of dual-use biological agents. In that regard, the Indonesian working group on the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, which consists of various governmental institutions, has started the drafting process for a national programme of action to implement the Convention.

I would now like to turn to the topic of chemical weapons. The so-called three pillars of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) — namely, the destruction of chemical weapons, non-proliferation and international cooperation should be implemented in a balanced manner and respected by all States parties.

All existing stockpiles of chemical weapons must be destroyed without delay. That is the first pillar of the CWC. We commend the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) for providing the necessary technical assistance for this purpose. Indonesia is seriously concerned over the slow pace of chemical weapons destruction by some possessor States and urges those States to confirm with the scheduled deadline of the destruction, as stated in the CWC.

As to the second pillar — that is, curbing the proliferation of hazardous chemical substances — intergovernmental cooperation is essential, so that transboundary movements of these substances can be strictly controlled. Care must be taken, however, so that the peaceful application of dual-use substances, especially for development purposes, is not hampered.

These two pillars of the CWC cannot be effective if we do not, at the same time, promote the third pillar, which is international cooperation and assistance. This is a very important incentive for those countries that have never built chemical weapons to join the Chemical Weapons Convention. While hoping the peaceful application of chemicals will not be restricted, many States parties are still in need of assistance in meeting their CWC obligations. This assistance must be provided. We also need to plan and carry out confidence-building measures, so that States parties can work together more closely.

Indonesia has been able to enhance its national capacity to adhere to the Convention. We have strengthened coordination among our stakeholders at the national level. This has been possible, because we are working in very close collaboration with the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW.

As part of Indonesia's contributions to achieving effective progress towards general and complete prohibition of chemical weapons and to promote cooperation in the field of chemistry for peaceful purposes, Indonesia, in conjunction with the OPCW, organized the Fourth Regional Meeting of National Authorities of States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention in Asia, which took place in Jakarta last month. The meeting provided a forum for States parties to the CWC to present their needs for assistance and indicate what assistance they could offer to other States parties. The meeting gave concrete input to the OPCW Technical Secretariat on how it could enhance its assistance to States parties in the region, pursuant to the Conference of States parties decision relating to the implementation of article VII of the CWC.

Ms. Fernando (Sri Lanka): Let me begin by adding my voice to those of other delegations who have spoken of the need for a clearer separation in the debate between the other weapons of mass destruction cluster and the outer space disarmament cluster. I hope that you will be able to convey our views to the next Chairperson of the First Committee.

On the first cluster, we would like to thank Ambassador Khan for his comprehensive presentation on preparations for the Review Conference on the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC), and we will, of course, give him our fullest support for the successful conclusion of the forthcoming Review Conference.

On the second cluster, we wish to state that Sri Lanka has had a long-abiding interest in the issues of outer space, grounded in our early involvement in the negotiations in the United Nations on pioneering undertakings of international law, which have included the law of the sea and outer space and have led to the defining of the concept of the common heritage of humankind and the formulation of the imperative of keeping space a peaceful arena for all time.

Several treaties and agreements have been concluded over the years to protect space assets, of which the 1967 Outer Space Treaty remains the most important. At the time of the conclusion of that Treaty in the early years of space exploration, only a very few nations had the ability to have their own space programmes. The situation today is quite different, with more than 130 countries possessing some space programmes and over 30 with launch capabilities.

Space technologies are particularly important for developing countries, as they impact on critical areas, such as communications, education, health and the environment, food security and disaster management, among others. Everyone has a stake in space security today.

As the fortieth anniversary of the Outer Space Treaty approaches in 2007, we would urge Member States to work towards its universalization and hope the Department for Disarmament Affairs will also lend its support, as possible, in this regard.

We all have a stake in examining together present and future threats and to keep outer space peaceful for all humankind. We were pleased, therefore, that there was a positive atmosphere and constructive momentum this year in the Conference on Disarmament, which included taking forward the discussions on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. Every year, the First Committee adopts, by overwhelming vote, a resolution on the topic, which, recalling Dag Hammarskjöld's wise counsel on the value of such hardy perennials, we believe establishes important principles and universal values, and will eventually have the weight of customary law.

Mr. Prasad (India): My delegation is grateful to Ambassador Masood Khan of Pakistan for his comprehensive presentation this afternoon, and for his painstaking preparations for the forthcoming Review Conference of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC). We look forward to a positive

outcome of this Conference and, at the very minimum, hope to have agreement on a forward-looking future intersessional work programme.

I shall confine my very brief remarks for now to the disarmament aspects of outer space. As several delegations, including those of Canada, China, the Russian Federation, Sri Lanka and the United States have just pointed out, there has been a dramatic acceleration in recent years in the peaceful uses of outer space and in international cooperation for this purpose. So also has there been increased potential, in particular for developing countries, to leapfrog and become full participants in the technology-based global economy of the twenty-first century.

India, for instance, has in the past year signed agreements with the Russian Federation and the European Union (EU) for cooperation in their Glonas and Galileo programmes, respectively, and the Indian Space Research Organization mission to the moon in 2008 will carry lunar surface mapping instruments from Bulgaria, the European Space Agency and NASA. A connectivity mission between India and the countries of the African Union (AU) is being pursued to provide both communication links and a range of space-enabled development-oriented services.

Given the increasing use of outer space for development purposes and the all-pervasive application of space technology to almost every aspect of modern life, we cannot overlook the importance of the security of assets based in outer space and the enormously harmful consequences of any possible threat to them. We, therefore, strongly support the quest to upgrade the present international legal framework for regulating space activities, established at the relative infancy of the development of space technology, and to buttress and strengthen existing space law for the peaceful use and exploration of outer space.

Respect for the safety and security of space assets and capabilities of all countries is a prerequisite for ensuring the continued flow of space-enabled services for all countries, including to developing countries.

The issue of outer space has been on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament since 1982, and an Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space functioned there for a decade, starting in 1985. That Committee was engaged in examining, as a first step at that stage, issues relevant to the prevention of an arms race in outer space. These issues remain as relevant today as they were two decades ago, if not more so. Earlier this year, we had useful discussions on that subject in the plenary of the Conference. India supports the re-establishment of an ad hoc committee of the Conference on Disarmament to deal with the issue of the prevention of an arms race in outer space and stands ready to contribute to its consideration in a constructive manner.

Mr. Kolesnik (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): During the general debate, our delegation set out its approach to the questions of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and other types of weapons of mass destruction. Allow me to set out briefly our position on one of today's burning issues: the prevention of an arm's race in outer space. The Republic of Belarus supports the efforts of countries aimed at preserving the peaceful character of outer space. Discussions in the Conference on Disarmament allows us to remain somewhat optimistic. The international community understands the threat of weaponization of outer space. That is not hypothetical; it is real.

We need space for the stable development of future generations. If we manage to create and strengthen a legal foundation for the peaceful use of outer space, then it will serve decades of future generations. If we lose time, then it will take us decades to correct that situation. In this connection, we support the continuation of the work within the Conference on Disarmament on the problems of the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We support the conclusions of the relevant international agreements, together with the development of confidence-building measures and measures for security, particularly as regards the use of outer space.

Mr. Oshima (Japan): I do not have a prepared statement, so my words might not be as beautiful as others, but I would like to make a few remarks on the Biological Weapons Convention and on the prevention of an arms race in outer space. First of all, on the Biological Weapon Convention, I would like thank Ambassador Khan for the very extensive and comprehensive explanation he gave. As many people have already pointed out, we think the upcoming Review Conference is a very important opportunity. We have not had good review for the past ten years. We had a conference, which was interrupted five years ago, and as a result we were unable to have a good review. This is the first comprehensive review in ten years, and we have many items to address. In addition to that, we

have an intersessional process, in which we have identified many questions that have not always been included in the articles. We must pay attention to both approaches; that is, the article-by-article approach and the crosscutting issues approach, which involves items that were taken up during the intersessional processes. What is important is that we will have many items to deal with in the coming Review Conference, and we must make a maximum effort to lead the Conference to success under the able guidance of Ambassador Khan. Frankly, there are several items that can be very difficult, but I think we are in a good enough position to proceed and lead the Conference to a success.

Now on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, our discussion was very interesting and, the more I hear, the more interesting it becomes. It is very true that under the presidency of the Russian Federation in the Conference on Disarmament we had very extensive and good discussions on the issue. Today, I also heard some new elements, for instance from the distinguished representative of Venezuela about how their country sees the problem and the domestic developments in that country, which are very new to me because Venezuela has never spoken out on that in the Conference on Disarmament. Coming back to the Conference on Disarmament, under the presidency of the Russian Federation we had good discussions and we have identified various types of issues; one deals with safe operation in outer space, including space debris and the jamming of satellite operations. There are many related items, which we have not addressed. As our colleague from Canada pointed out, these questions must be addressed first in the appropriate specialized agency or forum, like the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space or the International Telecommunication Union. They are the venues where we should study these technical matters first. There are also other concepts that have been mentioned but are, unfortunately, still not quite clear to some countries, including Japan. One example is the weaponization of outer space and the arms race in outer space. These are not entirely clear to us, but they may be very important concepts. I think, therefore, that we have to continue to discuss and try to define what they mean. Right now, for some countries like Japan, they are not yet well defined. I completely agree with countries that have pointed out that it is important to continue to discuss all the related items, with due concern for what is the best framework for addressing these problems.

The President: We will continue our discussion tomorrow. We will then proceed to the introduction of draft resolutions. Tomorrow and on Friday the Committee will proceed with its thematic discussion on the subject of conventional weapons. Tomorrow, we will also have two guest speakers, the President of the United Nations Review Conference on Small Arms and Light Weapons and the Chairman of the Group of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. I give the floor to France to speak on Other Matters.

Ms. Fernando (Sri Lanka): I wanted to thank the Secretary of the Committee for having responded to my request yesterday and for informing us which draft resolutions would be introduced. We thought it would be today, but it will be tomorrow.

However, Madam Chairperson, I wonder if, when you make the announcement, you could provide this information to the Committee as a whole. That would probably be quite useful for all representatives.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.

United Nations A/C.1/61/PV.12

General Assembly

Sixty-first session

Official Records

First Committee

12th meeting

Thursday, 12 October 2006, 3 p.m.

New York

Chairperson: Mrs. Juul ..... (Norway)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda items 82 to 97 (*continued*)

Thematic discussion on item subjects and introduction and consideration of all draft resolutions submitted under all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chairperson: The Committee will today begin its thematic discussion on the subject of conventional weapons. We have two guest speakers: Mr. Roberto García Moritán, Chairman of the Group of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms; and Ambassador Prasad Kariyawasam, President of the Conference to Review the Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

However, before we start our thematic discussion on conventional weapons issues, I intend to give the floor to a representative who, owing to time constraints, was unable to make a statement yesterday on other weapons of mass destruction or disarmament aspects of outer space. After he has spoken, I will give the floor to those representatives who were unable to introduce draft resolutions yesterday. We will then begin our discussion on today's thematic subject.

I first give the floor to the representative of the Sudan, who was unable to make a statement yesterday on other weapons of mass destruction or disarmament aspects of outer space.

Mr. Daffalla (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like first of all to thank His Excellency Ambassador Masood Kahn for his statement yesterday on the threats posed by biological and toxin weapons. My delegation reaffirms its determination to work to ensure a successful outcome to the sixth Review Conference to be held in November, especially given the failure of the 2000 Review Conference.

The international community must redouble its efforts to learn lessons from the past, to go beyond the negative results of the previous conference and to consider to what extent the Convention has achieved its objectives and met expectations. My delegation therefore emphasizes the need to revitalize the section pertaining to confidence-building measures, including through the provision of assurances, with a view to ensuring the proper implementation of the Convention.

My delegation would like to recall the role played by the Sudan in this respect by hosting, in 2003, the first Conference of the African National Authorities of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, and we stress the importance of such action at the regional level. Cooperation among African States is essential if we are to combat the use of chemical weapons and to prevent the possibility of such technologies falling into the hands of terrorists, which would threaten international peace and security. In that context, we must all unite in support of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Convention on

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Biological and Toxin Weapons. The universal nature of this Convention is based primarily upon the need for member States to implement the relevant programmes of action. Herein lies the importance of national efforts all by all parties concerned.

With regard to ensuring the safety and security of outer space, the risk of its militarization must be addressed. We must make sure that outer space is safeguarded against detrimental activities and in a way that would benefit all of humankind. We are not calling for all outer space activities to be reduced in scope, but we must ensure that outer space is not endangered in a manner that could have negative consequences for life on Earth. To that end, our delegation asks that all activities in outer space be devoted to peaceful purposes, with full transparency.

The Chairperson: We will now proceed with the introduction of draft resolutions and draft decisions by those delegations that wished to do so yesterday.

I call first on the representative of India to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.52.

Mr. Prasad (India): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.52, entitled "Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction". This draft resolution, first adopted in 2002, has continuing relevance as an unambiguous statement from a body that is universal and democratic. The representative character of the General Assembly validates and reinforces the commitments that we assume as Member States with regard to its objectives.

The draft resolution gives expression to the concerns of the international community and calls upon United Nations Member States to take measures aimed at preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction. It underlines that the international response to that threat needs to be inclusive, multilateral and global. That approach has been widely endorsed by the Non-Aligned Movement, the Group of Eight, the European Union and most other regional forums, including the Regional Forum of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

In addition to including some technical updates, the draft resolution reiterates its request to the Secretary-General to compile a report on measures undertaken by international organizations on issues relating to the linkage between the fight against terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. It thus equips the General Assembly with system-wide information on the work being done on that issue within the United Nations as well as in other bodies.

I appeal to delegations of the First Committee to lend to this initiative an even wider measure of support than that expressed over the previous four years, especially through additional sponsorship of the draft resolution. That would demonstrate a larger measure of engagement by the entire United Nations membership on this vital issue.

The Chairperson: Before giving the floor to the next speaker on my list, I ask that the Secretary brief the Committee on the current status of the various draft resolutions.

Mr. Sareva (Secretary of the Committee): I wish first to let members know what lies ahead: during the next few minutes, the following draft resolutions will be introduced.

First, there will be an introduction of the draft resolution on transparency in armaments. Secondly, there will be an introduction of the draft resolution under item 97, "Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction". Thirdly, there will be an introduction under sub-item (o) of item 90, "Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities". The fourth introduction will pertain to sub-item (p) of item 90, "Implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction". The fifth speaker will introduce, under sub-item (c) of item 90, the draft on measures to uphold the authority of the 1925 Geneva Protocol. The sixth introduction will be under sub-item (b) of item 90, "Missiles". Finally, there will be a presentation - not under this thematic cluster, but under the thematic cluster on nuclear weapons - under item 89, "Prevention of an arms race in outer space", sub-item (g) of item 90, "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: accelerating the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments", and item 93, "The risk of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East".

The Chairperson: I now call on the representative of the Netherlands to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.38.

Mr. Haasbroek (Netherlands): I would like to draw the attention of members to draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.38, "Transparency in armaments", which the Netherlands submitted yesterday and which has been distributed to all delegations. The draft resolution is of particular importance, as transparency in military matters contributes directly to the building of confidence and security between Governments.

In order to respond to the increased desire of Governments for openness on these matters, the United Nations established the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms in 1991. Annually, all Member States can provide data, on a voluntary basis, on their imports and exports of arms. Every three years, a Group of Governmental Experts reviews the operation and considers further development of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

This process really works. The respective Groups of Governmental Experts have made consistent and considerable progress. The recommendations of this year's expert group are now included in the draft resolution.

What is new? The 2006 Group of Governmental Experts has built on the achievements of the 2003 Group, whose work paved the way for broadening the scope of the Register. First, it has been recommended that international transfers of conventional arms involving only United Nations Member States should be reported to the Register. Secondly, an extension of the notification commitment regarding the sixth category of the Register — information exchange on a broader range of warships — has been proposed. Thirdly, the Group has developed an optional, standardized form for notification of transfers of small arms and light weapons. That will make notification easier for States.

Those recommendations are incorporated into the new draft resolution. Last year, the draft resolution was co-sponsored by 106 States. I kindly invite all delegations to sponsor the draft resolution this year so that we can do even better.

The Chairperson: I now call on the representative of Hungary to introduce draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.27.

Mr. Molnár (Hungary): Hungary, following the practice of recent years, has submitted draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.27, on the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction. Our objective is the consensus adoption by the General Assembly of the draft resolution during the course of the sixty-first session as well.

Given the fact that the Sixth Review Conference will follow the meetings of the First Committee, the Committee is not in a position to evaluate the outcome of the Review Conference. Thus, no reference is included in the draft text that would prejudge the outcome of the Review Conference.

The current draft builds primarily on the resolutions adopted in recent years while, at the same time, introducing the necessary updates to the text. In that regard, it welcomes, in the third preambular paragraph and in operative paragraph 2, the information and data provided by States parties through confidence-building measures; in operative paragraph 3, the significant participation of States in the intersessional process between 2003 and 2005 and the constructive and useful exchange of information achieved; in operative paragraph 4, the discussion and the promotion of common understanding and effective action on topics agreed at the Fifth Review Conference; and, in operative paragraph 6, the convening of the Sixth Review Conference, as agreed by the Preparatory Committee.

The draft resolution recalls, in its new operative paragraph 5, that the Sixth Review Conference was mandated to consider issues identified in the review of the operation of the Convention as provided for in its article XII and any possible consensus follow-up action. In operative paragraph 7, the Secretary-General is requested to continue to render assistance in the future.

Furthermore, under the final operative paragraph of the draft text, Member States decide that the item on the BTWC will be included, also in view of the outcome of the Sixth Review Conference, on the provisional agenda of the sixty-second session.

The language of the draft is aimed at avoiding any controversy or the reopening of discussions that might result from the aforementioned coincidence in timing. It is in our common interest for the Sixth Review Conference to be successful.

In that connection, the adoption of the draft resolution by consensus, as in previous years, remains a priority for us. Hungary wishes to remain the sole sponsor of the draft resolution on the BTWC. At the same time, we hope that Member States will be in a position to support the draft resolution this year as well.

Mr. Koshelev (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation wishes to submit for consideration by the First Committee a draft resolution entitled "Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities" (A/C.1/61/L.36).

Ensuring security in outer space and the safe functioning of spacecraft is a crucial task. The use of outer space is becoming increasingly important to humankind, and the benefits to all States of the use of spacecraft are becoming increasingly evident today.

In that respect, it is essential to enhance our knowledge of outer space; promote transparency in States' activities; avert any accidental or deliberate interference in the normal functioning of spacecraft; and ensure the non-deployment of weapons in outer space.

Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities would help ensure the predictability of such activities and could become a consolidating factor for all States in that respect. The achievement of concrete results and the elaboration of a well-thought-out and responsible approach to the further development and use of outer space would no doubt weaken any motivation to deploy weapons in outer space.

The draft resolution submitted by Russia is based on General Assembly resolutions aimed at preventing an arms race in outer space. It further elaborates on resolution 60/66, also entitled "Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities", adopted last year. Operative paragraph 1 of resolution 60/66 requests States to give their views on the advisability of further developing international outer space transparency and confidence-building measures in the interest of maintaining international peace and security and promoting international cooperation and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We believe that all States would be in favour of such activities.

We are grateful to all those States that have informed the Secretary-General of their views on this issue. The new draft resolution goes a step further than resolution 60/66 in that it invites all Member States to submit to the Secretary-General before the sixty-second session concrete proposals on international outer space transparency and confidence-building measures in the interest of maintaining international peace and security and promoting international cooperation and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. The draft also requests the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly a report on this issue.

The draft is an invitation to hold further discussions on an issue that has direct bearing on the security and safety of all States, regardless of their outer space potential. We noted last year that we view the recommendations made in the report (A/48/305) of the Secretary-General submitted to the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly as a practical objective for our work. Those recommendations propose that research be done by governmental experts on the implementation of measures to strengthen confidence-building measures in outer space.

The situation 13 years later has indeed evolved. We have made great progress in the field of outer-space technology, and we have to react to those changes. Accordingly, we deem it worthwhile for the United Nations to continue to work in the area of outer space activities.

We are convinced that this new draft resolution is line with the interests of all States without exception. It does not limit the legal right of States to self-defence, nor does it prevent States from engaging in the peaceful use of outer space. Our goal is to take into account the views of all States Members of the United Nations, with a view to the maintenance of international peace, security and stability.

We distributed the text of our draft resolution in a timely manner, and it remains unchanged. We are grateful to those States that have become sponsors of the draft.

We appeal to States to support the Russian draft resolution entitled "Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities". We hope that it will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Chomicki (Poland): It is my honour and pleasure to introduce, on behalf of the delegation of

Poland, a draft resolution on the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC).

It is a longstanding tradition for Poland to introduce a draft resolution on the implementation of the CWC. We believe that this draft resolution is unique and important because it concerns weapons of mass destruction, namely chemical weapons; it represents a success story for multilateralism; and each year it incorporates new elements that objectively reflect the process of the implementation of the CWC. Work on the draft resolution is conducted in an atmosphere of trust and transparency, it has overwhelming support from all regions, and it is adopted by consensus. Our aim is to continue these positive traditions, and we will do our best in that regard.

The draft resolution on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention is once again very timely. In our work on the draft, we concentrated on developments in the implementation of the CWC since the adoption of last year's resolution. There were real achievements and also some challenges, which are reflected in this year's draft.

The draft introduces the following new element: the reaffirmation of the obligation of the States parties to destroy chemical weapons within the time limits provided for by the Convention. That important substantive addition was made for the first time in the history of the Chemical Weapons Convention resolution. The introduction of that paragraph is a serious achievement of all delegations, which worked constructively and in a spirit of understanding and cooperation.

The draft resolution welcomes the appointment of Ambassador Rogelio Pfirter as the Director-General of the Technical Secretariat of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. A reference is made to the beginning of work on the preparations for the second special session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Special emphasis is placed on the tenth anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention and note is taken of the unveiling in The Hague on 9 May 2007 of a permanent memorial to all victims of chemical weapons.

Special emphasis is also placed on maintaining the importance of the action plan on the implementation of article VII on national implementation measures. The draft resolution also stresses the importance of articles VII and X in the fight against terrorism. That is the first reference in any General Assembly draft resolution to the importance of the national implementation of a disarmament treaty in the fight against terrorism.

The importance of the role of international cooperation and assistance is confirmed. The draft resolution also reaffirms the importance of article XI provisions relating to the economic and technological development of States parties and recalls that the full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation of those provisions contributes to universality.

We consider that the text of this year's draft resolution is well balanced. It demonstrates the unreserved support of the United Nations for the full and effective implementation of all the provisions of the Convention. Our basic intention and goal was to ensure, as in last year's resolution, consensus approval for the draft resolution. Consensus is crucial to providing the unmitigated support of the United Nations for the implementation of the Convention.

Let me express gratitude and thanks to the delegations that participated in the extensive consultations on the new draft resolution on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. Those consultations confirm the existence of broad political support in all regions for the implementation of the Convention in its entirety. The agreed draft resolution presented today is a material expression of that support.

As in previous years, Poland remains the sole sponsor of the draft resolution on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. The sole sponsorship has been supported in various consultations and shows regional and political balance and broad support for the draft resolution. The delegation asks for the adoption of the draft resolution on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention without a vote.

Mr. Adji (Indonesia): I have the honour, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, to introduce the following draft resolution for the consideration of the Committee. Under the cluster before us, we will submit a draft resolution entitled "Measures to uphold the

authority of the 1925 Geneva Protocol", as contained in document A/C.1/61/L.5, under agenda item 90 (c).

There are only two technical updatings of the draft resolution, contained in the first preambular paragraph and operative paragraph 4. We continue to renew our call to all States to observe strictly the principles and objectives of the 1925 general Protocol. We also call upon States that have not yet done so to withdraw their reservations to the Protocol. We believe that such an act would contribute positively to achieving effective progress towards general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

We hope that all member States will render their support to the draft resolution.

Mr. Najafi (Islamic Republic of Iran): I have the honour to take the floor to introduce the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/61/L.3, entitled "Missiles". Egypt, Indonesia and the Islamic Republic of Iran are the sponsors of the draft resolution.

Since the introduction of this item in the agenda of the General Assembly in 1999, increasing support has been given to addressing the issue of missiles in all its aspects within the United Nations. The Non-Aligned Movement, in the final document of its recent summit in Havana, stated that

> "the Non-Aligned Movement heads of State and Government remain convinced of the need for a multilaterally negotiated, universal, comprehensive, transparent and non-discriminatory approach towards missiles in all their aspects as a contribution to international peace and security. They express their support for efforts to be continued within the United Nations to explore further the issue of missiles in all its aspects. In this regard, they emphasize the need to keep the issue on the agenda of the United Nations General Assembly and that, in accordance with its resolution 59/67, a Panel of Governmental Experts on the issue of missiles in all its aspects will be established in 2007."

The first Panel of Governmental Experts, which was established in 2002, adopted its report — the very first such report in the history of the United Nations — in which the issue of missiles in all its aspects was addressed comprehensively. The success of the first Panel opened the prospects for exploring further ways and means on that issue within the United Nations.

Unfortunately, the second Panel of Governmental Experts ended its task short of a success similar to that of the first. The Secretary-General, in his report to the General Assembly, stated that

> "given the complexity of the issues at hand, no consensus was reached on the preparation of a final report" (*A/59/278, para. 5*).

That situation showed once again that dealing with the complex issue of missiles requires further preparation, with extensive organization, proper timing and intensified effort on the part of all of us.

In that regard, the General Assembly adopted resolution 59/67, in which it requested the Secretary-General to prepare a report, with the support of qualified consultants and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), as appropriate, taking into account the views expressed by Member States, to contribute to the United Nations endeavour to address the issue of missiles in all its aspects by identifying areas where consensus could be reached and to submit it to the General Assembly at its sixty-first session. Thanks to the efforts of UNIDIR and the Department for Disarmament Affairs, the report was prepared and submitted on time.

The General Assembly, by resolution 59/67, also decided to establish a third panel of governmental experts in the consecutive years of 2007 and 2008, with a more specific mandate "to further explore further ways and means to address within the United Nations the issue of missiles in all its aspects, including identifying areas where consensus can be reached" (*para. 3*). That mandate, in contrast to the broad mandates of the previous Panels, has been narrowed down for the purpose of enabling the Panel of Governmental Experts to be more specific and focused in its discussions. The time frame of two years for the Panel seeks to provide more time to its experts to enable them to have a thorough and sufficient discussion.

This year's draft resolution is based on previous resolutions, including resolution 59/67, and has been updated without any substantive changes. It takes note of the recent report submitted by the Secretary-General in document A/61/168. That report will be a valuable input to the third Panel of Governmental Experts,

which will hold its first session in June next year. We expect that the upcoming Panel will succeed in fulfilling its mandate by identifying areas where consensus can be reached on the issue of missiles in all its aspects.

My delegation hopes that the delegations of this Committee will be able to support the draft resolution, as they have in previous years.

Mr. Shamaa (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): Egypt, together with an overwhelming majority of States, believes that the conclusion of a comprehensive legal instrument, based on the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, is the only way to address the clear shortcomings in the legal regime governing outer space.

In that context, the Conference on Disarmament dealt elaborately with issues related to the prevention of an arms race in outer space through the work of the Ad Hoc Committee that was convened within the framework of the Conference between 1985 and 1994. The Committee's conclusions from the 1985 meeting made clear the urgency of preventing an arms race in outer space. Current developments reaffirm that urgency. That should prompt us to conclude an agreement to re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament next year.

Egypt supports the efforts of Russia and China to draft in the near future an international legal agreement on the prevention of an arms race in outer space and the use or threat of use of weapons against objects in outer space. That would represent an important step towards addressing the entire issue of the militarization of outer space and a major contribution to the work of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space once it has been re-established.

Indeed, any legal instrument to prevent an arms race in outer space should include a ban on the use of outer space for military purposes and clear provisions to promote cooperation among States to ensure that the use and exploitation of outer space redound to the benefit of all States, in accordance with the preamble to the 1967 Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies.

Egypt also believes that regional and international peace and security can be achieved not through the prevalence of military doctrines, but through cooperation among all States. In that context, we reaffirm our support for the launching of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament to establish a comprehensive regime to prevent the use of outer space for any military purpose, in the framework of a programme of work agreed by consensus in the Conference.

In the light of the foregoing, my delegation is submitting a draft resolution on the prevention of an arms race in outer space, contained in document A/C.1/61/L.10. The draft resolution is submitted alternately every year by Sri Lanka and Egypt. It calls on all States to pursue their efforts to reach agreement on the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee with a view to the creation of a legal regime on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

We call on all States to continue to support the draft resolution, especially in the light of the detailed and concentrated discussions held in the Conference on Disarmament in 2006 on the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

Mr. Macedo (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of Argentina, Australia, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Monaco, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and my own country, Mexico, I have the honour to introduce for the fourth time a draft resolution entitled "United Nations study on disarmament and non-proliferation education", under agenda item 90 (f).

The sponsors are convinced that disarmament and non-proliferation education is an effective tool to provide ways and means to increase national and international security at the lowest possible level of armaments and to reinforce the link between global peace, general security and sustainable development in a world that is increasingly interdependent, as indicated in the United Nations study on disarmament and non-proliferation education.

The draft resolution requests the Secretary-General to prepare a report on progress in the implementation of the recommendations contained in

the study, and to submit it to the General Assembly at its sixty-third session. It also requests the Secretary-General to disseminate all information related to that report and any other information that the Department for Disarmament Affairs gathers in regard to progress in that area.

As members will recall, the text has been adopted without a vote in previous years. We hope that we can again count on the support of all delegations with a view to achieving consensus once again in support of the goals that we all pursue in this Committee.

Now, on behalf of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Indonesia, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Philippines, Spain, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Uruguay, and my own country, Mexico, my delegation is honoured to introduce a draft resolution entitled "United Nations Disarmament Information Programme", under agenda item 91 (b).

The draft resolution has been submitted biennially since 1996. It seeks to ensure follow-up to the World Disarmament Campaign. The text we are submitting on this occasion recognizes the efforts made by the Secretariat to ensure the effective use of the limited resources for the dissemination of the Programme, including by electronic means and the media, and to inform our Governments of the adverse effects of weapons proliferation, in particular with regard to small arms and light weapons.

The draft resolution also recommends that the Programme continue to educate and generate public understanding of the importance of multilateral action, including action by the United Nations and the Conference on Disarmament aimed at general and complete disarmament.

The dissemination of information in that important field is a further measure to help us to meet our objectives. To that end, we call upon delegations once again to express their support for the draft text, which has been distributed. We recall that both texts submitted today are open to further co-sponsorship.

The Chairman: I now propose to move on to today's thematic discussion. I will first give the floor to our guest speakers.

I call on the Chairman of the Group of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

Mr. R. García Moritán (Argentina) (Chairman, Group of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms) (*spoke in Spanish*): As this is the first time that I am taking the floor, I wish to express my special pleasure at seeing you, Madam, preside over the work of the First Committee at this particular time, when the disarmament agenda certainly requires exceptional leadership if it is to regain its former dynamism. I am sure that, under your skilful leadership, we will be able to conclude our session this year with a more encouraging outcome for all the items under discussion.

I have the responsibility of chairing the Group of Governmental Experts on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms this year. I also had the opportunity to do so in 2003. I must say with some satisfaction that, both in 2003 and 2006, we were able to make encouraging progress on the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

Our Register is especially important as an obvious and essential confidence-building measure. That is clearly reflected in the high level of participation among Member States in the Register. An analysis of the material that has been distributed to delegations by the Department for Disarmament Affairs reveals that participation is particularly important. Since the Register's establishment, some 170 have participated in it. Only 22 States Members of the United Nations — 15 from Africa and seven from Asia — have not done so. I believe that this gives a sense of the Register's importance. If representatives have the chance to consider document A/61/159, they will find included the reports submitted up to 2005 by Member States that grasped the significance of doing so.

If we compare the information compiled in the Register to non-governmental reports, such as that of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, we note that some 97 per cent of the global trade in conventional weapons is covered by the Register. That figure may increase considerably next year, as it is very likely that the five permanent members of the Security Council will submit reports for the first time, at which point the report will cover 99 per cent of the global arms trade.

I believe that gives us a clear indication of the Register's importance and the extent to which that confidence-building measure effectively contributes to preventing the excessive accumulation of weapons and averting political destabilization, and without a doubt to effective confidence-building.

This year, we have made tangible progress once again, chiefly in the category of warships. We have been able to reduce tonnage on those warships for which information has been submitted. That is not insignificant, as it substantively broadens the scope of information on which we expect Member States to report.

Another important aspect on which the Register made significant progress is the voluntary way in which Member States can submit information. In that respect, we have included an element to which I attach particular importance: the form on small arms and light weapons. That is an issue of increasing significance and to which all delegations should pay particular attention. The new form will allow those Member States that wish to do so to submit their reports annually, systematically and in an orderly manner. It is divided into two segments — one on small arms and the other on light weapons. We identify the elements that fall under each heading. This is not an attempt to offer a complete definition of small arms and light weapons, but it will undoubtedly provide indicative tools of what Member States are to provide information on.

The delegation of the Netherlands was kind enough to introduce a draft resolution this afternoon on the adoption of the report of the Group of Governmental Experts.

We are also on the brink of taking additional important steps. We shall soon include new technological means used in electronic warfare and the projection of forces in each of the categories. We are also very close to including unmanned aerial vehicles as an additional significant factor. We held an intense debate on the possibility of the future inclusion of an eighth category on small arms and light weapons. I must confess that I have not yet lost hope that we will be able to include that eighth category in the future.

We wish to express our particular gratitude through you, Madam, to Under-Secretary-General Tanaka and his team, in particular Mr. Nazir Kamal, whose cooperation has been excellent. We also thank the various experts for their participation; they have helped the Group yet again to make progress in updating the Register, as requested by the General Assembly.

The Chairman: I now call on the President of the Review Conference on Small Arms and Light Weapons.

Mr. Kariyawasam (Sri Lanka) (President, United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its Aspects): I am grateful for this opportunity to address the members of this Committee in my capacity as the President of the recently concluded Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. First, I should like to extend my congratulations to you, Madam, on your election to guide the work of this Committee at this difficult and challenging juncture for disarmament in general, and non-proliferation in particular.

I am also pleased to see so many familiar faces here, who toiled with me during the Review Conference. Of course, I should also like to take this opportunity to thank Under-Secretary-General Tanaka and his team for the support that they gave me during those difficult times.

As we meet in the wake of the 2006 Review Conference, this session of the First Committee no doubt will also focus on the outcome of the Conference. It is possible for member States to pick up from where we left off in July and chart a course on the way forward to fully implementing the Programme of Action and even to look beyond with a view to strengthening our global efforts.

We need to learn lessons from the Review Conference as to how we can contribute better to our struggle against the scourge of illicit small arms and light weapons. I am happy therefore that I have now been given an opportunity to share some thoughts with the First Committee.

Yes, we are all disappointed that the Review Conference could not agree on an outcome document, but I think it would be a mistake if we allow that fact to devalue the broader positive impact of the

Conference. The lack of a concrete outcome should not discourage us from pursuing the full implementation of the Programme of Action at the national, regional and global levels with renewed vigour and determination. We should not overlook the fact that over 30 per cent of the speakers in the general debate of the Review Conference were high-level representatives, many of them at the ministerial level. A large number of civil society representatives and parliamentarians were among the stakeholders at the Conference who contributed energetically to mainstreaming the issue at the global level. A significant achievement at the Conference was the overwhelming reaffirmation of the commitment of participating member States and other stakeholders to fully implement the Programme of Action.

When I agreed to preside over the work of the 2006 Review Conference, I was fully aware of the trials and tribulations of the task. I was handicapped by a lack of progress on substantive issues at the Preparatory Committee meeting of the Conference. Therefore, from the outset there was no apparent clarity on divergent views on substance, as well as differing interpretations of the scope of the Conference. On the one hand, a very large number of States adopted a work-in-progress view of the Programme of Action and perceived the Conference as an opportunity to strengthen the Programme Of Action through further agreements on several important issues that were left unresolved in 2001. On the other hand, some others preferred an approach that would limit the Conference to a straightjacket evaluation of the progress made in the implementation of the agreed Programme of Action. The latter group seemed to argue that the Programme of Action was in its early stages of implementation or far from being fully implemented, and that therefore the focus of the Conference should be only on improving the Programme's implementation.

Faced with that challenge, it became important to undertake extensive consultations, both bilaterally and multilaterally, in order to try to reconcile opposing approaches and begin a process of consensus-building way ahead of the Conference. Therefore, in the period from March to May, I conducted several open-ended informal consultations and attended several regional and other meetings. Following those efforts, I developed a non-paper that, in my perception, could serve as a basis for negotiations on a final outcome of the Conference. Reflecting as much as possible the various inputs and views received from States, some of which were completely contradictory of one another, the non-paper evolved through several revisions during the consultation process leading up to the Conference. The non-paper, I am happy to say, was later adopted as a working paper by the Conference and is thus available on record.

During the consultation process, it became clear that there was little or no chance for agreement on the two most contentious, but most-talked-about issues relevant to the substance of the Programme Of Action that had been left out in 2001: the issue of controls on civilian possession, and small arms and light weapons transfers to non-State actors. However, on most other issues, I felt that if States could muster enough political will and flexibility, the possibility existed to reach a compromise. However, progress towards compromise remained slow and, despite an encouraging breakthrough — the emergence of a compromise on language concerning small arms and light weapons transfer controls — in the end it was not possible to overcome some differences. The Conference, therefore, could not agree on a meaningful outcome document that would not diminish the pith and the substance of the Programme of Action and would contain recommendations for concrete measures to fully implement the Programme of Action with a clear road map for follow-up action, in particular at the global level.

There has been much discussion on the reasons why it was not possible to conclude an outcome document. We need to look at a combination of factors, and let me point out some issues that, in my view, may be useful for further reflection.

First is the current status of the multilateral disarmament agenda. The small arms and light weapons process is not immune to the malaise currently afflicting multilateral disarmament efforts. Unless all Member States, particularly major Powers, renew their confidence in the United Nations as a stage or a vehicle for addressing important disarmament issues at the global level and renew their commitment to global measures in multilateral forums, we are bound to see an increasing number of inconclusive United Nations disarmament meetings in the future.

Second is the failure to reach a compromise on key unresolved issues. The 2001 Programme of Action

was a manifestation of the resolve of the international community to address a burning and real issue that was affecting a great number of countries and societies. The United Nations was expected to coordinate that effort at the global, regional and national levels with the cooperation of all the stakeholders. However, the Programme was adopted as a compromise and it was understood that all issues relevant to illicit small arms and light weapons were not included in it; in particular, some key issues were deliberately left out in 2001 for the sake of consensus. It was assumed by many at that time that the Programme was a first step on the long road towards eliminating the proliferation of illicit small arms worldwide.

Many agree that without addressing several issues, such as non-State actors, ammunition and civilian possession, it will not be possible to adequately address the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. In that context, it is essential that the Programme of Action be understood as a living document subject to global dynamics that change with time, and therefore in need of review and strengthening in a forward-looking manner to be fully implemented in all its aspects. The problem of illicit trade in small arms and light weapons can be handled meaningfully by the international community only if we all reckon that the Programme of Action cannot and should not be frozen in time.

Third is the consensus rule. In the United Nations, as a matter of established practice on issues that relate to the national security of States, decisions are taken on the basis of consensus. The small arms and light weapons issue became no exception to that understanding. However, consensus works best when all the parties genuinely seek compromise for the sake of the common good and are willing to exercise flexibility in order to achieve results acceptable to an overwhelming and preponderant majority. In that context, the establishment of rigid redlines is certainly not conducive to achieving consensus. The practice adopted by some of insisting on unanimity as consensus can lead to a veto on the consensus-building process. I am convinced that a more judicious use of the consensus rule during the Review Conference and its preparatory process would have gone a long way towards the conclusion of an outcome document.

The outcome of the Review Conference is not a reason for any discouragement. The Review Conference did not diminish the value or the palpable progress made in the implementation of the Programme of Action. Since 2001, hundreds of thousands of weapons and ammunition have been destroyed and national commissions have been established in over 80 countries, including in my country. States adopted an international instrument on the marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons and we have made advances towards addressing the key issue of illicit brokering, which will be the object of a study by a Group of Governmental Experts that will commence its work next month. Most importantly, the international community as a whole has been made aware of the abominable effects of the illicit trade in small arms, and several States and societies are taking unilateral measures to curb that evil practice.

The road ahead is still quite long and arduous. We must keep our spirits high and persevere in our struggle to spare humanity from the threat of illicit small arms and light weapons. The elimination of that scourge will bring peace and tranquillity to many countries, societies and neighbourhoods. We need to continue improving measures for the full implementation of the Programme of Action, and we also need to look beyond. If we are to be effective in that regard, it is essential to have a mechanism at the global level to evaluate, in a transparent and cooperative manner, how States, regional and international organizations, and civil society have embarked on implementing their commitments and agreed at the global level to enhance international cooperation and assistance to enable all States to fulfil their commitments.

The Programme of Action already envisages the need for periodic reviews in its implementation. Indeed, the breadth and substance of the debate, the mobilization of civil society and the media, and the intensive preparatory process at the national and international levels in the period leading up to and during the review mechanism meetings are in themselves important factors in keeping the momentum alive and in manifesting and sensitizing international opinion. I am hopeful, therefore, that this Committee will seize the opportunity to agree on a mandate for such a forward-looking mechanism.

In conclusion, let me recall the poignant words of the Secretary-General at the commencement of the Review Conference, when he said that those weapons may be small, but they cause mass destruction. And it is time we hear his words once again. Time is running out. Let us commit ourselves once again to all action

possible to stop the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons in our midst now.

The Chairman: It is now my intention to provide the Committee with the opportunity to have an interactive discussion with our guest speakers by having an informal question and answer session. Before doing so, I will suspend the meeting in order to continue in an informal mode.

The meeting was suspended at 4.15 p.m. and resumed at 4.25 p.m.

The Chairperson: I will now give the floor to delegations wishing to make statements on today's thematic subject, "Conventional weapons".

Mr. Turcotte (Canada): As we are all acutely aware, the illicit transfer and misuse of conventional weapons have had a devastating impact on people throughout the world. Canada's approach to the many issues related to conventional weapons includes traditional non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament, as well as humanitarian, human rights and development concerns.

Although there have been some disappointments in the past year, we have also seen progress, reflecting what we believe to be the widespread collective determination of States to address issues related to small arms, landmines and a host of other conventional weapons.

Canada recognizes the need to continue to strengthen the global regulatory framework governing the transfer of all conventional weapons. To that end, we fully support General Assembly resolution 60/226, which addresses transfers of conventional arms, and submit regular annual reports to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. We encourage all States to submit annual reports pursuant to that resolution.

As stated in July at the United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, Canada is also supportive, in principle, of a comprehensive, legally binding arms trade treaty that prevents the illicit flow of arms to conflict zones. We commend the work done to date by civil society and the United Kingdom on the arms trade treaty initiative, and we will work closely with all involved.

Combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons while respecting the legitimate interests of lawful firearms producers, exporters, retailers and owners is an important element of Canada's foreign policy. Canada remains committed to the full implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and places particular priority on transfer controls to prevent illicit flows; ensuring responsible civilian possession and the appropriate use of small arms by State officials; stockpile management and disposal; reducing the demand for small arms and light weapons for illicit purposes; and increased international cooperation and assistance. Canada also welcomes the establishment of the Group of Governmental Experts to examine the brokering of small arms and light weapons. Like many others, we were disappointed that States did not agree upon an outcome document at the Review Conference in the summer. Nonetheless, it is our belief that through renewed creative and constructive efforts, we will achieve our common goals.

With respect to process, Canada sees great value in regular, global-level meetings to advance implementation of the Programme of Action. In our view, these should include both formal meetings of States at least every two years and informal intersessional meetings to bring States together more frequently so that important thematic work can continue to be undertaken between formal meetings of States.

Canada also recognizes the multifaceted threat posed by the illicit trade in man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS) and values the many initiatives in that area, particularly those of Australia, Israel and the United States. We view the potential risk of the misuse of MANPADS primarily from a non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament perspective, and will continue to work closely with other States to effectively address this issue.

Another area where concerted action on conventional weapons is well under way is the global effort to rid the world of the scourge of anti-personnel landmines. With 151 States parties, the Ottawa Convention has become a key instrument in addressing the humanitarian, peace, security and development impact of anti-personnel landmines. At the world summit on mine action in Nairobi two years ago, as well as last year in Zagreb and at the seventh meeting of States Parties to the Ottawa Convention, held in

Geneva just last month, States parties reaffirmed their determination to achieve the goal of a mine-free world and to provide all necessary support to landmine survivors in order that they can be rehabilitated and reintegrated into their societies as full, productive members. Canada continues to support all aspects of mine action and commends the significant efforts of mine-affected States parties to fulfil their treaty obligations within the established deadlines. Canada also acknowledges the extremely valuable contributions of many other donor countries, and is pleased that we are collectively staying the course.

The results speak for themselves. The number of direct victims has been cut virtually in half in less than a decade, and vast tracts of land have been returned to productive use. Even greater results can be expected as the number of States parties continues to grow.

In our capacity as coordinator of the Convention's universalization contact group, Canada is pleased to report that four countries have ratified the treaty since December 2005, and several more indicated at the most recent meeting of States parties, in September, that they have put processes in motion that will lead to accession in the near future. We welcome the many statements by States parties which emphasize the importance they place on the universalization of the Convention, and we encourage accession by all countries.

Canada is extremely concerned about the humanitarian and development impact of other types of weapons as well, and hopes that the forthcoming third Review Conference on the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), to be held next month in Geneva, will produce concrete results. Canada welcomes the entry into force of Protocol V of the CCW, which addresses the humanitarian impact of explosive remnants of war. We are in the process of considering ratification of Protocol V and encourage all other States to do so as well.

Like many other countries, Canada is disappointed by the lack of progress on mines other than anti-personnel mines after almost five years of discussion, and we hope that States will begin to negotiate a new protocol on such mines immediately following the forthcoming Review Conference.

The current mandate of the Working Group on Explosive Remnants of War, which has attempted to determine the adequacy of international humanitarian law with respect to weapons which may lead to explosive remnants of war, is coming to an end. It will be very important to determine appropriate next steps.

In closing, I would like to say that it is our sincere hope that we will continue to use our collective experience to guide our deliberations in order that the work we undertake during this session of the First Committee will further advance our shared arms control and humanitarian goals.

Mr. Kahiluoto (Finland): I am speaking on behalf of the European Union. The acceding countries Bulgaria and Romania, the candidate countries Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia, and the European Free Trade Association country Liechtenstein, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, align themselves with this statement.

The uncontrolled proliferation and wide misuse of small arms and light weapons are at the heart of the main security challenges of our time. Action against these phenomena has to be intensified. Small arms and light weapons and their ammunition are instrumental in the deaths of more than 500,000 people annually, the vast majority of victims being civilians. Small arms and light weapons are a major factor in triggering and spreading conflict and in the collapse of State structures; they facilitate violent crime and terrorism, impede post-conflict reconstruction and undermine development. Of the 49 major conflicts in the last decade, 47 were conducted with small arms and light weapons as the major weapons. The intensified international action against terrorism has made the fight against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons even more urgent.

The European Union is committed to working to combat the uncontrolled proliferation and misuse of small arms and light weapons. The Union aims at reducing the unregulated availability of small arms and light weapons in areas of conflict or potential conflict by promoting strict transfer controls and the safe destruction of surplus weapons, promoting measures for limiting the demand and helping affected Governments deal with all aspects of the problem. The European Union also aims to tackle the fundamental causes of instability by, inter alia, pursuing and stepping up its efforts with regard to political conflicts,

development aid, poverty reduction and the promotion of human rights and the rule of law.

In order to further its objectives, the European Union has a specific strategy to combat the illicit accumulation of and trafficking in small arms and light weapons and their ammunition, and various specific instruments are at its disposal. These include a Code of Conduct on Arms Exports, a Joint Action on combating the destabilizing accumulation and spread of small arms and light weapons and a Common Position requiring that each member State introduce national legislation to effectively control brokering activities.

The European Union is one of the foremost international actors in efforts to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, including practical work on the ground. In addition to action being financed by member States in their national programmes, the European Union and the European Community allocated for the years 2003 to 2005 some €105 million for external assistance programmes of relevance to small arms action. We are committed to continuing to play a leading role in this area and call on others to join the efforts to the maximum extent possible.

The 2005 World Summit Outcome Document (resolution 60/1) stressed the negative effects of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. World leaders expressed grave concern about the effects on development, peace and security and human rights posed by, inter alia, the illicit trade in such arms. They committed themselves to supporting the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

The European Union calls for ensuring in concrete terms that the Outcome Document's commitments give rise to immediate practical value for action on small arms and light weapons, including, among other things, the work to be done and the resources to be provided, as appropriate, by the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund. The European Union will fully contribute to the expeditious and comprehensive implementation of small arms and light weapons-related General Assembly resolutions, including those addressing the negative humanitarian and development impact of the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons and their excessive accumulation. The Union invites others to do likewise.

The European Union is deeply disappointed that the Programme of Action Review Conference was unable to agree on an outcome document. Notwithstanding this, we recognize the value of the Conference in reaffirming our commitment to the principles, measures and objectives of the Programme of Action. That commitment continues to be translated into concrete action at the national and regional levels. That should also be the case at the global level. We will need to assess together our efforts, achievements and shortcomings. This review starts at the national level but also requires a global analysis in order to seriously address the nature of the small arms problem. We look forward to coming together on a biennial basis, as established both in the Programme of Action and in the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, a time and place to be decided by the General Assembly at its current session. The review cycle should, in our opinion, culminate in a review conference.

The European Union continues to strongly encourage progress to improve small arms and light weapons transfer controls. The Union will continue to work for wider understanding among States on the need for global guidelines for transfer controls on the basis of the common understandings that were developed at the Review Conference this year.

The fight against the illicit trade in ammunition continues to be another pressing task. From the beginning of the United Nations process on small arms and light weapons, ammunition has formed an integral part of the problem. Currently there is growing awareness of the importance of this problem, reflected in the draft resolutions adopted by this Committee. It is time that we addressed the problem of conventional ammunition in a more active and a more comprehensive manner.

Global standards on marking and tracing are essential for tracking and cracking down on the illicit trade in these weapons. The adoption of the International Instrument on marking and tracing was a first, and important, step in the implementation of the Programme of Action in that regard. The European Union supports full implementation, and further

strengthening in the future, of the International Instrument by making it legally binding.

Brokering controls remain a high priority for the European Union, as illicit brokering is recognized as being among the main factors fuelling the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons worldwide. The European Union is looking forward to a substantial report by the Group of Governmental Experts on brokering. In our view, the Group should take a practical approach to its work and recommend concrete measures necessary to combat the harm done by unscrupulous illicit arms brokers.

The Union is convinced that assistance to countries affected by armed violence should be provided as an integral part of development strategies, given the close link between security and development. We have also taken note of the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, adopted on 7 June 2006, which clearly spells out the linkages between armed violence and development. States should mainstream action to eliminate illicit small arms and light weapons and integrate armed violence prevention programmes in plans and strategies related to security, development and poverty reduction. The European Union believes that, with its regular meetings, in New York, the Group of Interested States in Practical Disarmament Measures is making a valuable contribution to that end.

Let me now turn to the important new proposal calling for the establishment of an arms trade treaty, which we also mentioned in our general statement. Every day and everywhere, people are affected by the side effects of irresponsible arms transfers. The negative impact on peace, reconstruction, security, stability, human rights and sustainable development is especially damaging to developing countries, in particular in Africa. In addition, it diverts scarce resources from vital poverty alleviation and other development work. The European Union has noted that there is a strong call from a number of the world's political and spiritual leaders, as well as from States and civil society, for the establishment of a new treaty to better regulate the trade in arms.

As there is currently no comprehensive internationally binding instrument available to provide an agreed regulatory framework for this activity, the European Union welcomes the growing support in all parts of the world for an arms trade treaty. The European Union considers that starting a comprehensive formal process to that end at the United Nations at the earliest opportunity is called for, and views the draft resolution under discussion (A/C.1/61/L.55) as providing the basis for that.

Binding standards, consistent with existing responsibilities of States under relevant international law, would be critical in tackling conventional arms proliferation which is undesirable, irresponsible and which particularly affects some of the most vulnerable parts of the world.

The use of man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS) by terrorists and non-State actors as a tool for threatening civil aviation and aviation involved in peacekeeping operations warrants worldwide attention and sustained and comprehensive action. MANPADS are extremely lethal, easily concealable and inexpensive. Here, the European Union firmly supports broader efforts, in various multilateral forums, focusing in particular on export controls including the Wassenaar Arrangement and the initiative of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Group of Eight (G-8) to internationalize controls.

European Union member States have been working with other States in the field of MANPADS destruction and stockpile and security management and will continue to work proactively to help those States not in a position to do so to secure their stockpiles and to destroy surpluses of these weapons. The European Union encourages other States, where they are able to, to participate actively in stockpile and security management and destruction activities, to help guard against further illicit use.

The European Union fully supports intensifying efforts to prevent the illicit transfer and unauthorized access to and use of MANPADS, including strenuous implementation of the relevant General Assembly resolutions, which were adopted by consensus. Growing international concern about the proliferation of MANPADS needs to be translated into practical support to international, regional and national efforts to combat and prevent the illicit transfer of MANPADS and unauthorized access to and use of such weapons.

The European Union welcomes progress achieved in universalizing the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, destroying stockpiled anti-personnel mines, clearing mined areas and assisting victims. We

consider the first Review Conference, which took place in Nairobi in 2004, as a landmark success that provided the international community with an opportunity both to assess and to reflect on the progress that has been made on the path to a mine-free world and to refocus our efforts to achieving that goal. In order to overcome the remaining challenges for the full implementation of the Convention, the Nairobi Conference agreed on an ambitious Action Plan for the next five years, to which the European Union is fully committed. We welcome and support the subsequently adopted final documents of the Sixth and Seventh Meetings of States Parties, held in Zagreb and Geneva, respectively.

Building on this success, the European Union welcomes the appeal of the World Summit to the parties to the Convention to fully implement their commitments, as well as to all States in a position to do so to provide greater technical assistance to mine-affected States. We wish to call upon all States that have not yet done so to ratify or accede to the Convention as soon as possible. The European Union is united in its support for and promotion of the draft resolution on the implementation of the Convention (A/C.1/61/L.47).

The European Union has provided assistance to affected States and communities and will continue to do so. For the years 2003 to 2005, European Union Member States and the European Community allocated over €530 million for mine action.

Speaking on behalf of the European Union, we would like to point to the European Community's strategy, in particular to its strategy for the years 2005-2007, which, in the light of an interim target of zero new victims, seeks to reduce the threat of landmines on the ground and in stockpiles by offering social, economic and medical assistance to affected local populations and to the victims of landmines. The European Union as a whole will continue to support humanitarian mine action focused on the poorest mine-affected countries. We will continue to work to improve the effectiveness of the international mine action system.

The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and its Protocols constitute an essential and integral part of international humanitarian law. The CCW has a solid, well-balanced regime, which takes into account both humanitarian concerns and military requirements. It has proved its usefulness in creating a number of new legally binding instruments. The European Union attaches great importance to the effective implementation of the CCW and its Protocols, as well as to continuing with determination the work on creating new legally binding instruments under the CCW, where necessary — as, for instance, in the case of mines other than anti-personnel mines.

The CCW is particularly topical now, because the third Review Conference will be held in November. The tasks of the Review Conference are to review, clarify and strengthen where necessary existing obligations and their implementation. The European Union looks forward to a successful Review Conference — that is, a conference contributing to upholding and developing this regime in a way that further strengthens international humanitarian law; we support the efforts of the President-designate of the Conference.

The Review Conference should also achieve successful results on the issues currently under discussion in the CCW process, notably, on mines other than anti-personnel mines. The European Union wants the Review Conference to achieve tangible results through a legally binding instrument on such mines which strikes a balance between humanitarian concerns and military considerations and which strengthens international humanitarian law. We call on all States parties to the CCW to make the expected progress possible at the Conference.

Another current issue that the European Union wishes to highlight is that of explosive remnants of war. On this issue, the European Union sees several goals that should be pursued simultaneously: the universalization of Protocol V, its expeditious and effective implementation and continuation of further work on munitions that may become explosive remnants of war, including sub-munitions. The further work should include both work on strengthening implementation of existing international humanitarian law and work on possible preventive technical measures.

The European Union recalls its proposal, made at the most recent meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the Review Conference, that, at a minimum, the mandate of the working group on explosive remnants be extended at the Review Conference. In this context, we would state our view that the Review Conference

should be also forward-looking, setting perspectives for useful future work until the next Meeting of States parties, which should be held next year, and the following Review Conference.

Transparency in the area of conventional arms, and in particular in the area of small arms and light weapons, is an essential component of fighting the uncontrolled proliferation of such weapons and in providing an atmosphere of confidence and security. To this end, the European Union welcomes the recommendations of the Group of Governmental Experts that carried out the fifth review and further development of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. The achievements of the Group pave the way for development and progress with respect to the overall aim of the United Nations Register, namely, effective transparency in armaments. The recommendations of the Group need to be implemented, and the work on further developing the United Nations Register continued.

Mr. Da Rocha Paranhos (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am taking the floor on behalf of the States members of the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR), Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay and Venezuela, and the associated States Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru.

I would like to start by expressing my gratitude to Mr. Roberto García Moritán, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Argentina, and Mr. Prasad Kariyawasam of Sri Lanka for their presentations this afternoon.

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is a problem of great seriousness and requires the particular attention of the international community. In this regard, we attach great importance to efforts, based on international cooperation, to prevent, combat and eliminate this illicit activity while ensuring respect for the rules and principles of international law, as well as to the key responsibility that falls to each and every State in ensuring the implementation of relevant measures.

Our countries are aware of the grave consequences of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons for regions throughout the world, and we have demonstrated strong political will by adopting concrete measures in the fight against this scourge.

At its most recent meeting, held in Brasilia in September 2006, the MERCOSUR Working Group on Firearms and Ammunition had an exchange of views on the marking and tracing of ammunition, in particular on the individual marking of cartridges in line with steps already taken by a number of countries of the region. In November 2005, within the framework of the Organization of American States (OAS), the States members of MERCOSUR and associated States attended a meeting to consider the implementation of the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials. In February 2006, we attended the meeting of the OAS Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) held to adopt model laws on the marking of firearms and thus to ensure that countries of the region apply the Inter-American Convention.

We have also contributed towards the common approach adopted in Latin America and the Caribbean by submitting specific proposals on matters pertaining to ammunition, illicit brokering, follow-up mechanisms and mechanisms for assistance and international cooperation. These proposals were enshrined in the Declaration of Antigua, Guatemala, which was adopted in May 2006 by the regional conference to review progress made in Latin America and the Caribbean in the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eliminate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

We note with concern and deplore the failure to achieve results at the first Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action. The MERCOSUR countries and associated States are of the view that there is a need for follow-up mechanisms for the Programme as well and for biennial meetings and review conferences to continue to assess progress made in the implementation of the Programme. Although the Conference concluded without arriving at a final document, we are confident that States will have sufficient political will to find a new opportunity to make it possible to continue the process that we had launched. We wish to put on record the full commitment of our countries to the implementation of the 2001 Programme of Action.

While Governments bear the primary responsibility to ensure the necessary resources for implementing the Programme of Action, our countries are of the view that there is also a need to make

progress in the provision of cooperation and assistance, including through the transfer of technologies.

The MERCOSUR countries and associated States attach particular importance to the issue of ammunition. In this regard, we believe that this matter should receive specific treatment within the United Nations, considering that the issue of small arms has been repeatedly recognized as closely linked to the issue of ammunition. We believe too that it is indispensable that we make progress towards concluding a legally binding international instrument on illicit brokering. We hope that the Group of Governmental Experts will be able to start its work as soon as possible. We wish to reaffirm our commitment to spare no effort in addressing the issue of small arms. Our key objective in that respect is to obtain results that will have a positive impact on our societies.

Anti-personnel mines and their large number of civilian victims continue to cause deep concern in our countries. South America is well aware of the humanitarian consequences of the use of such weapons. Their persistence is one of their most harmful features. We are particularly disturbed by the fact that those mines have indiscriminate effects. They frequently cause civilian victims, including women and children, long after an armed conflict has ended.

MERCOSUR and associated States are convinced that peace, security and cooperation should be built on commitments that will strengthen mutual confidence and trust and will promote development and the well-being of the region. To that end, since 1989 MERCOSUR and associated States have entered into significant regional and subregional commitments, including the July 2002 Declaration of the South American Zone of Peace and Cooperation. In that Declaration we committed to establishing a gradual phase-out regime which, as soon as possible, would result in the complete eradication of anti-personnel mines in accordance with the Ottawa Convention and the implementation of the recommendations of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons.

In that vein, the August 2003 Lima Declaration: For a Hemisphere Free of Anti-personnel Mines reaffirmed the importance of abiding by the principles and fulfilling the obligations under international law with respect to anti-personnel mine action, through the complete elimination of those weapons worldwide, and the creation of a South American zone free of anti-personnel mines.

The political will of our countries is reflected in specific measures such as the submission of reports in compliance with the 1997 Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. In the context of its national mine clearance plan, Chile launched humanitarian mine clearance operations in the north of its territory in February 2006, on the border with Peru and Bolivia, as well as in the border area between Argentina and Bolivia. At the same time, all stocks have been destroyed, leaving only the minimum quantity in accordance with the Convention. This has been a signal of strengthened mutual confidence.

Colombia has also achieved significant progress in that area, due to ongoing and joint action of the Anti-personnel Mines and Unexploded Ordnance Observatory. The Colombian Government has been working with the Observatory in order to strengthen the attention given to victims of those devices in various regions of the country.

Among the most recent achievements, should be singled out, the development and adoption of the national strategic plan to coordinate, monitor and standardize actions against anti-personnel mines and to compile existing information on that subject. The plan focuses on four areas: risk reduction education; assistance to victims; information management; and emergency mine clearance.

For its part, in 2003 the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela destroyed 47,189 mines from the arsenals of its national armed forces.

One must also recall the important role played by a number of countries in our region, in the context of mine clearance activities undertaken by the Mine Clearance Assistance Mission in Central America (MARMINCA), with the dispatch of military experts.

The MERCOSUR countries and associated States welcome the contributions made by Bhutan, Ethiopia, Latvia and Vanuatu towards the universalization of the Ottawa Convention. We encourage those countries that have not yet done so to consider the possibility of acceding to the Treaty.

Finally, we reaffirm our commitment to continue to work towards the promotion of the implementation

of the Ottawa Convention, as we confirmed at the Review Conference in Nairobi. MERCOSUR and associated States are confident that the Action Plan 2005-2009 will meet its objectives by drawing on full cooperation among its State parties. It is crucial to put an end to the unnecessary suffering caused by anti-personnel mines, by ensuring the elimination of such mines, by mine clearance and by providing assistance to victims, as well as providing education on the risk presented by those mines.

Mr. Weisleder (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): As this is the first time I have taken the floor on behalf of the Central American Integration System (SICA), consisting of Belize, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama, and the associated State Mexico, I wish to congratulate you, Madam, on assuming the Chair of the First Committee and to convey to you, and all other members of the Bureau, our wishes for a successful outcome of your work.

On the topic of conventional weapons, we wish to refer in particular to the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and its follow-up mechanisms. They are priorities for our countries, which face real threats to their national and regional security, as reflected in the high levels of crime, organized crime and drug trafficking that are affecting our region. For that reason, we have participated enthusiastically and with great commitment in the regional conference that was successfully organized by the sister republic of Guatemala in the city of Antigua last May.

As members are aware, the Antigua Declaration was signed by all Latin American and Caribbean countries. It established parameters and high standards in the fight to eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Unfortunately, as acknowledged by the Chair of the Review Conference on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Ambassador Kariyawasam, the expectations set out of our Declaration by far exceeded what was achieved at the Review Conference. Hence our profound disappointment at the outcome of that meeting, in particular due to the lack of agreement on follow-up mechanisms for the Programme of Action.

The Antigua Declaration addresses various aspects of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, which is a priority concern in our region. In that respect, it recognizes the importance of almost all members of the Organization of American States having ratified the Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials (CIFTA) and its model legislation. We are also committed to the implementation of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. We are also committed to redouble our efforts to develop a legally binding instrument that would include ammunition.

We must emphasize that fact that the Antigua Declaration also recognizes that the issue of the illicit trade in ammunition is intrinsically tied to the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. For that reason, we support the adoption of a legally binding instrument on the conventional arms trade, including the import, export and transit of such weapons. Such a treaty should meet the criteria of transparency and non-discrimination and should be negotiated on a multilateral basis. We also call on all States to fulfil the provisions contained in chapter II of the Programme of Action, with regard to management of stockpiles and the destruction of confiscated, seized or collected small arms and light weapons, the establishment of appropriate, detailed standards and procedures to ensure the security of existing stockpiles and the identification and responsible management of surplus stocks. In that connection, we reaffirm our support for national and regional organizations and civil society organizations in their campaigns to raise public awareness with regard to the fight against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

The issue of the inadequate regulation of civilian possession of such weapons is of concern to the great majority of States, as is indicated in the report of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), entitled "Five Years of Implementing the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons" which notes that "Since 2002, around 70 per cent of States that have reported address issues related to civilian possession" (p. xxiii). In that respect, the countries of our subregion believe there is a need for adequate regulation of civilian acquisition and possession of small arms and light weapons through, inter alia limiting the type and quantity of weapons that civilians can acquire and possess, as well

as strict requirements for licenses, permits and registration.

We wish to express our gratitude for the assistance provided by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean and by the United Nations Development Programme in formulating our national reports.

As indicated in the Antigua Declaration, we have suggested the establishment of a database within the Department for Disarmament Affairs for the publication of best practices on various aspects of the Programme of Action. Once again, we call on Member States and international organizations that are in a position to do so to meet the needs of national authorities that request cooperation and assistance in implementing the Programme of Action.

Most of the aforementioned issues should have been reflected in a final document of the July 2006 Review Conference. A number of them fall under the Programme of Action, and others clearly complement the Programme. Unfortunately, the lack of political will among certain States made negotiations impossible and jeopardized the significant progress that has been achieved so far. In that context, there was not even the political will to lay the basis for the follow-up mechanism called for in the Programme of Action. The SICA countries and Mexico again call on the First Committee to effectively resolve the issue of biennial follow-up in order to review the progress made in the implementation of the Programme of Action and to adopt necessary measures to strengthen it.

The SICA countries and Mexico reaffirm our commitment to buttress the Programme of Action and to continue working, on the regional and subregional levels, to strengthen it. We shall spare no effort as the First Committee continues its endeavours.

Mr. Li Song (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Although no final document resulted from the 2006 Review Conference of the Programme of Action on Small Arms, the Programme remains significant in guiding the international community in its fight against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. All parties concerned continue to make efforts in promoting the full implementation of the Programme of Action. China is ready to communicate and cooperate further with the parties concerned in order to promote the full and effective implementation of the Programme of Action, with a view to removing the threat caused by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons at an early date.

China welcomes the initial work of the United Nations group of governmental experts on the illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons in November, and hopes that the group will help strengthen the international community's understanding of the issue of illicit brokering and will explore effective and feasible solutions.

China notes that some countries have put forward new initiatives on regulating the conventional arms trade. We are of the view that each country must adopt measures to regulate its own arms trading activities, in order to effectively combat the illicit trade in arms. At the same time, since the arms trade is a complicated issue, and since the security, national defence and economic interests of all States are also relevant to the issue, all parties should hold extensive, practical, in depth discussions on relevant issues and identify, by consensus, the work that lies ahead.

As a transparency mechanism, the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms plays a positive role in enhancing confidence among countries. China has great regard for the Register and has actively and constructively participated in the work of every Group of Governmental Experts on the Register. Through common efforts, this year's Group again made important progress further reaffirming the spirit of relevant General Assembly resolutions and the principles and purposes of the Register. Those helped to maintain the universality of the Register. The Group also made important efforts towards increasing the operational flexibility of the Register, and we welcome that progress.

Proceeding from the principle of putting people at the centre, the Chinese Government accords the highest priority to and is committed to resolving humanitarian issues related to arms control and stands for a balanced approach to addressing the humanitarian concerns and legitimate military and security needs of each State.

China also considers important and supports the efforts related to the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW). China earnestly fulfils its obligations under the CCW and its Protocols and actively participates in the work of the Group of Governmental Experts established by State parties to the Convention.

Since its accession in 1998 to Amended Protocol II, on anti-personnel mines, China has overcome financial, technological and other difficulties in order to promote full implementation of the Protocol, and that has been successful. China fully understands the humanitarian concerns caused by anti-vehicle landmines and has been participating in the relevant deliberations aimed at constructively achieving a proper solution. We hope all parties will adhere to the principles of equity, pragmatism and consensus and will accommodate each other's concerns on the basis of mutual respect, in order to make progress in the armoured vehicle launched mine clearance process.

China has been actively engaged in international demining assistance aimed at ridding countries of problems caused by landmines. Last month, China launched a three-month demining training course in Nanjing, for 40 mine clearance officers from Jordan and Lebanon. China will also donate demining equipment to those countries.

We are pleased to see that the Protocol on Explosive Remnants of War, an important achievement as part of the CCW, is about to enter into force. China believes that the entry into force of the Protocol will influence more countries to accede to the Protocol and promote the early realization of its objectives. The Chinese Government is working actively to promote the ratification process.

Mr. MacKay (New Zealand): Today, I would like to take the opportunity to address aspects of the conventional weapons debate relating both to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), and to small arms and light weapons. I shall first address CCW issues.

At the upcoming CCW Review Conference in November, New Zealand will be looking for progress on the effective implementation of international humanitarian law so as to mitigate the humanitarian impact of conflict. In particular, New Zealand is committed to the negotiation of a legally binding instrument on cluster munitions, one which allows our concerns relating to reliability, targeting, transfers and destruction of outmoded stocks to be addressed. We were one of a group of countries which introduced a negotiating mandate for consideration at the Review Conference to address the humanitarian concerns posed by cluster munitions.

Key elements which we should be addressing in our pursuit of more specific international regulations include, first, the problematic persistent nature of failed cluster munitions; secondly, any use of cluster munitions within areas with concentrated civilian populations; thirdly, indiscriminate attacks of a nature to strike combatants and civilians alike; fourthly, the use of those weapons in circumstances likely to cause disproportionate loss of civilian life and damage to civilian objects; and lastly, the worrying potential for increased proliferation, retention or use of outmoded cluster munitions stocks. The negative impact of cluster munitions contamination on humanitarian operations and on economic recovery in post-conflict situations is already well established, with corroborating evidence from recent events reinforcing the necessity for action.

We would also welcome the conclusion of an instrument on mines other than anti-personnel mines, if a legally binding text could be agreed that made a credible improvement on existing provisions of international humanitarian law. We do not see that this requirement could be satisfied by the conclusion of a text which carried optional provisions on the key issues of detectability and active life.

On small arms, we were among those who were disappointed not to have reached agreement on an outcome document recording this year's review of the 2001 Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We do not underestimate the complexities of reconciling State sovereignty, commercial and trade freedoms and civil liberty considerations with steps that need to be taken at the global level to mitigate and prevent the harm done by the illicit trade in light weapons. However, we do consider that further global-level action is possible and certainly warranted.

In that context, we strongly support the initiative by the United Kingdom and others to launch discussions at the United Nations level on an arms trade treaty. We welcome the circulation of a draft resolution on that subject (A/C.1/61/L.55) for consideration at this session.

We very much welcome Canada's initiative to co-convene a global meeting on principles to guide decisions on transfers of small arms and light weapons, which will be held in Geneva in mid-2007. The

suggested global guidelines which emerged from the Nairobi meeting on transfer controls last April appear to us to be a sound platform on which to build such discussions.

Finally, we look forward to the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on arms brokering. We consider that this too should help maintain momentum on the issue of small arms and light weapons over 2007.

Mr. Kandie (Kenya): The Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction has registered tremendous progress towards the goals set by the Nairobi Action Plan. The universalization of the Mine Ban Convention has received a welcome boost since the Sixth Meeting of the States Parties, by the deposit of instruments of ratifications by Ukraine, Haiti, the Cook Islands and Brunei Darussalam. The Mine Ban Convention is now 151 States strong. That is good news indeed. The reports by the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Latvia on the fulfilment of their stockpile destruction obligations is yet another step forward. In addition, the fulfilment of article 5 obligations by Guatemala and Suriname gives us further cause to be optimistic that universalization will soon be achieved.

The recent successes on the Mine Ban Convention should not, however, make us complacent. Members need to fast-track the implementation of commitments towards realization of the Convention's goals and ultimately towards a totally mine-free world, so that our peoples can go about their everyday lives without the terrible prospect of risking the loss of life or limb.

In that regard, we wish once again to appeal to States to fulfil their obligations to assist those affected and afflicted by landmines. The positive momentum created since Nairobi, through the Seventh Meeting of States Parties just concluded in Geneva, should be sustained and accelerated. More efforts need to be exerted to ensure full universalization of the Convention. To that end, assistance should be given to Member States that have undertaken to fulfil their obligations in destroying stockpiled anti-personnel mines, as well as in mine clearance commitments.

In about two years' time, we will reach the first deadlines for the clearance of anti-personnel mines. In that regard, the true test of the Mine Ban Convention will be the manner in which requests for deadline extensions are handled. States parties will be called upon to honour the Convention's tradition of international cooperation and transparency in dealing with requests for extensions, while remaining faithful to the Convention's overall aim of ending, for all people for all time, the senseless suffering caused by anti-personnel mines.

In conclusion, we urge delegations to remember that the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction is a solid instrument based on basic humanitarian considerations. It seeks to rid the world of the barbaric and inhumane weapons that continue to have such devastating consequences for innocent people. Kenya therefore strongly encourages Member States to adhere to the Convention's obligations and urges all those States that have not yet acceded to the Convention to do so.

Mr. Chidumo (Mozambique): As I am taking the floor in the Committee for the first time, allow me to join previous speakers in congratulating you, Madam, upon your election as Chair of the First Committee as well as to extend our congratulations to the other members of the Bureau.

Mozambique attaches great importance to the issue of disarmament. We note with concern the lack of progress in the multilateral machinery dealing with the issue of disarmament. Lack of consensus on this matter prevented the 2005 World Summit from mentioning disarmament and non-proliferation in its Outcome Document (resolution 60/1).

The main challenge in today's world is to curb the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, which constitutes a threat to peace, security and development in many countries, particularly in Africa. We therefore wish to express our disappointment at the failure, last July, of the United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects to agree on an outcome document. During that meeting, my delegation expressed its hope that the Conference would come up with a strategy that would foster the full implementation of the Programme of Action, while enabling the establishment of measures to reduce the negative impact of small arms and light weapons.

Despite the recent failure, my country continues to attach great importance to the prevention, combat and eradication of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We would therefore like to reiterate the continued relevance of the Programme of Action, whose integrity should be observed. The implementation of the Programme of Action remains a key element in supporting the prevention and resolution of conflicts, as well as in promoting long-term security and stability to create an enabling environment for sustainable development in developing countries, particularly in Africa. The successful implementation of the Programme of Action depends both on national efforts and, to a large extent, on our political commitment to strengthen cooperation at regional and global levels.

At the national level, Mozambique is committed to the implementation of the Programme of Action as a step forward towards the consolidation of peace, security and stability within and beyond our borders. After a difficult period of our history, as a result of the war of destabilization in the Southern African region which was characterized by the proliferation and illicit use of firearms and light weapons, the Southern African region is now fully engaged in regional economic integration for the benefit of its peoples.

It is in that framework that my country has been engaged since 1992 in the process of the collection and destruction of firearms. In fact, in 1995, a structured special operation aimed at identifying, recovering and destroying hidden caches of firearms was initiated, which led to the destruction of about 30,000 pieces of different types of firearms and more than a million items of ammunition and related material. Those operations were conducted in collaboration with neighbouring South Africa and constitute an example of fruitful cooperation between neighbouring countries in the area of public security.

Mozambique continues to encourage initiatives from civil society towards promoting and consolidating the culture of peace and non-violence. Furthermore, in compliance with the Programme of Action, Mozambique established in 2005 a national commission responsible for the coordination and integration of national efforts necessary to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. At the regional level, within the Southern African Development Community (SADC), we are in the process of implementing the Protocol on the Control of Firearms, Ammunition and Other Related Materials.

Mozambique wishes to reaffirm the importance of multilateralism as an essential element for the strengthening and promotion of disarmament, peace and security. In order to deal effectively with the threat that small arms and light weapons represent to humanity, the international community needs to seriously take continued and concerted action to prevent the proliferation of those arms.

This session offers an opportunity to make progress in the fight against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. For that reason, Mozambique supports the establishment of a common international instrument on the import, export and transfer of conventional arms that would help to prevent, combat and eradicate sales or transfers of such arms that are likely to promote conflict, displacement of people and terrorism. We believe the negotiations for that important instrument should be conducted within the framework of the United Nations and through a transparent and inclusive process, in order to ensure consensus among all Member States.

Let me conclude by expressing our sincere hope that this session will contribute towards progress in the fight against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and ultimately to the well-being of our peoples.

Mr. Choi Hong-ghi (Republic of Korea): Since this is my first opportunity to take the floor, allow me to congratulate you, Madam, on your assumption of the Chairmanship of this important Committee.

The proliferation of conventional weapons is a matter of increasing concern to the international community. Conventional arms, used recklessly and irresponsibly, inflict no less harm and misery than weapons of mass destruction. In many regions of the world, the widespread availability of small arms is severely destabilizing, putting at risk peace, security and development, serving as a catalyst for armed conflict, supporting criminal activity and causing tragic human suffering.

The international community has made real progress in addressing this problem. The adoption of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons in 2001, followed by the agreement on the International Instrument on marking

and tracing and the entry into force last year of the firearms Protocol to the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime are substantive steps forward. Following on the heels of those achievements, however, it was doubly disappointing that the Programme of Action Review Conference in July failed to produce an outcome document with guidance for further measures and follow-up mechanisms.

My delegation hopes that at this session the First Committee will breathe new life into the Programme of Action and our collective commitment to implement it fully. In this regard, it is of the foremost importance for us to agree at this session on a follow-up process. The first step of such a process should be convening a biennial meeting. In that regard, we support draft resolution A/C.1/61/L.15 on the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. We also look forward to the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on Illicit Brokering of Small Arms, to be convened next month, which we hope will strengthen our commitment to the implementation of the Programme of Action.

Indeed, we believe that much more can be done on the issue of small arms and light weapons. My delegation supports the initiative for an international instrument to control international arms transfers. We share the concern that legal transfers of conventional arms are sometimes used as a cover for illegal transactions, especially of small arms and light weapons. To address that problem, an effective, transparent system of controls over international arms transfers is a prerequisite.

A meaningful achievement in the field of conventional arms was the agreement at the recent Group of Governmental Experts meeting to further expand the scope of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. My delegation commends the panel for their achievements, including the decision to reduce the minimum size of warships from 750 to 500 metric tons and the provision of an optional standardized form for reporting transfers of small arms and light weapons.

We note that the number of Member States participating in the Register has not increased since 2001. We urge those States that have not yet participated to join. Similarly, we would like to see wider participation in the United Nations Standardized Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures. By enhancing transparency in military matters, these mechanisms reduce international tensions and build confidence within the community of nations.

The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) has played a pivotal role in realizing the principles of international humanitarian law, ever since it was adopted in 1980. As a State Party to the CCW, the Republic of Korea has faithfully implemented the principles of the Convention and participated actively in widening and strengthening the CCW regime. My delegation welcomes the upcoming entry into force of Protocol V of the CCW on explosive remnants of war (ERW), and wishes to inform the Committee that our Government has begun the internal review process for its ratification.

The last two CCW Review Conferences have produced some successful results. My delegation is concerned, however, that with the Third Review Conference only a month away, the negotiations on mines other than anti-personnel mines (MOTAPMs) may be stalling, despite the five years of hard work put in by the Group of Governmental Experts. Considering that this topic is to be one of the main focuses of the upcoming Conference, we hope that those negotiations will not provide yet another disappointment in the field of multilateral disarmament issues.

My delegation supports the idea of a legally binding instrument that addresses the inhumane effects of such mines. In light of the divergence of views that persists on key issues, however, we believe that, if the States Parties to the CCW hope to see tangible outcomes produced at the Third Review Conference in November, we need to explore creative ways to implement practical, realistic procedures. We sincerely hope that all States Parties will demonstrate the political will necessary to bridge the remaining perception gaps on that kind of mines and work out a viable solution.

Mr. Kosheler (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The uncontrolled proliferation of conventional weapons in the world is a matter of justifiable concern to the international community and the most acute evidence of that problem may be seen in countries with low levels of socio-economic development. It is difficult to contest the direct link between the intensity of armed conflicts, on the one hand, and poverty, mass violations of human rights and the norms of international humanitarian law, the

mobilization of child soldiers and cross-border crime on the other. We share the concerns about the humanitarian aspects of the issue.

At the same time, we note the essence of the issue, first and foremost, in the illicit trafficking of weapons. As practice shows, it is precisely the illicit supply that provides the main source of such weapons for illegal armed groups, criminal elements and the Governments of States that are under Security Council embargoes.

We support the efforts of the international community towards the prevention of the uncontrolled and illicit proliferation of conventional weapons. We consider the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms as an important institution for strengthening confidence and security in international relations. Russia regularly submits data to the Register. We support the inclusion in the Register of man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS) and we are satisfied with the results of the work just concluded by the Group of Governmental Experts on the function and development of the Register. The Group succeeded in adopting, by consensus, a draft report of the Secretary-General to the sixty-first session of the General Assembly.

The Group of Governmental Experts in 2003, then again in 2006, set a good precedent for the development of the Register. The pragmatic tactic of small steps in that sphere is the most realistic and acceptable one under present day conditions. We believe that the further development of the Register will come about, first of all, by taking into account the important goal of the universalization of the Register. We note some progress in the control of small arms and light weapons at the national, regional and global levels. However, the problem of the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons in certain regions of the world not only continues, but is becoming more acute.

We are in favour of the solution to the problem of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons on the basis of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. We do not regard the Review Conference on the Programme of Action as having been without results. Nearly all countries that participated in the Conference confirmed their adherence to the Programme of Action. Nobody spoke of revision of the Programme. On the contrary, everybody spoke of the importance of expanding joint efforts in the prevention of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, with a stress on dealing with specific problems at the national and regional levels.

We are in favour of a continuation of specific measures to prevent the diversion of small arms and light weapons from legal trade to illicit trafficking. We are in favour of strengthening regional interaction to prevent the uncontrolled proliferation of small arms and light weapons. We took an active part in the work of the special session of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) forum devoted to small arms and light weapons issues in Vienna on 17 May 2006. At that conference, a number of important proposals were considered to improve the tracing and marking of small arms and light weapons, as well as measures designed to prevent the illicit proliferation of man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS).

In the anti-terrorism context, we attach special consideration to ensuring control over MANPADS. Such a weapon in the hands of terrorists represents a direct threat to the safety of civil aviation. We are actively working with our partners in the Commonwealth of Independent States on issues relating to man-portable air defence systems. The provisions set out in documents adopted at the regional level to strengthen controls over the export of man-portable air defence systems would benefit from being extended to other regions of the world.

We can understand the desire on the part of certain States to take steps to bring order to the legal trade in weapons, in order that that trade does not feed the black market or act as a source of destabilizing accumulation, especially in crisis regions. We are not opposed to discussing this issue. The proposal put forward by a group of countries to draft an international instrument to regulate the trade in conventional weapons merits attention. However, we believe that such work is only justified if it is aimed at halting the illicit trade in weapons and offers specific measures to prevent such weapons from being diverted from the legal trade to illicit trafficking — especially into the hands of terrorists.

In addition, we believe that joint work at the United Nations should seek to bring order to the legal production and export of weapons — which is to say, it should prevent piracy in the production of weapons,

the export of such weapons under expired licenses and their re-export without the authorization of the country of origin. In that regard, we should also take into account the following facts.

There are already international and regional instruments in place to promote the orderly trade in weapons. Those include the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects (CCW), the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and the Wassenaar Arrangements. Their basic shortcoming is that they lack effectiveness and universality. It would therefore be logical, in the first place, to attempt to gain the maximum benefit from existing instruments — and only then proceed to drafting new instruments.

We are keen to ensure that The Hague International Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation is as effective as possible. In that connection, it is important that States parties to The Hague Code of Conduct fully fulfil their obligations. We favour the Code becoming a genuine multilateral mechanism for transparency and confidence in the field of the non-proliferation of missiles, with a central role being played by the United Nations — a mechanism that unites us all and does not lead to drawing new dividing lines. That is precisely the aim of the Russian initiative to amend the text of the Code: to promote adherence to the Code by States that are significant in terms of missiles.

We share the concern of the international community about the serious humanitarian consequences of the use of anti-personnel mines. We reaffirm our belief in the idea of a world free from the use of mines as weapons. Russia's concrete contribution to the achievement of that goal is its ratification of Protocol II additional to the Inhumane Weapons Convention. In principle, we do not rule out joining the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction at a reasonable future date. However, that can only occur when there is certainty that Russia will be able to fulfil its obligations. In order for that to take place, it will be necessary to resolve a host of military, technical, economic and financial problems. Our real contribution to disarmament in the area of landmines is the large-scale work taking place in Russia to eliminate or reduce our landmine stockpiles. In recent years, more than 6 million anti-personnel mines have been destroyed. We also have a project to destroy 10 million of the remaining stock of the most dangerous types of anti-personnel mines, using effective and environmentally safe technology developed by Russian specialists.

We are strictly abiding by the provisions of the CCW and the Protocols thereto. The lower chamber of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation recently approved an amendment to article 1 of the Convention, broadening its scope to non-international conflicts. The next task is to ratify Protocol V to the CCW, on explosive remnants of war.

The upcoming third Review Conference of the States Parties to the CCW will be a landmark in the strengthening of the Convention. We favour a detailed and well-balanced consideration of the implementation of the Convention, as well as the development of realistic and balanced solutions.

We have a positive view of the work done by the Group of Governmental Experts on mines other than anti-personnel mines. The Group's investigations simply confirm the sensitivity of the issue from that standpoint of the defence interests of States. We are prepared to consider further substantial exchanges of views on that subject.

We cannot but be concerned about the situation that has emerged as regards common European control of conventional armed forces. This is not the first year — nor is it our fault — that there has been a delay in the entry into force of the Adaptation Agreement on the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. Russia has fulfilled all its obligations under the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe emanating from the 1999 Istanbul Agreement on adaptation of the Treaty. At the third conference to consider the effect of the Treaty, we once again underscored that, given the effects of large-scale military and political changes, the Treaty has by and large become outdated and has lost touch with reality. Its basic limits have been eroded as a result of NATO's expansion. We do not regard the results of that conference as satisfactory. Nor do we find satisfactory the general state of affairs as regards the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe. The Russian Federation will carefully analyse the

results of the conference, as well as the positions of NATO countries. On that basis, we will draw conclusions as to our future policy with regard to the implementation of the Treaty.

In April of this year, the United Nations Disarmament Commission carried out useful work on issues pertaining to confidence-building measures and transparency in conventional weapons. Unfortunately, as in 2003, it was not possible to achieve consensus on confidence-building measures. The Commission was only able to adopt a procedural report. However, on that occasion no one stated that the Commission was unnecessary or cast doubts on the importance of the principle of multilateralism. We welcome the renewal of the Commission's work. It is our hope that, in the next two year of its substantive work, it will be possible for us to produce consensus recommendations in this area.

The Russian delegation will be guided by the views contained in this statement as we consider the draft resolutions introduced in the First Committee.

The Chairperson: We shall continue our thematic discussion on the subject of conventional weapons tomorrow. We will also give delegations the opportunity to introduce draft resolutions. In addition, we will have a guest speaker, namely, the President-designate of the Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.